Last dance of Cha-cha staged on Senate floor today

Story on PAGE A2

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Road digging killing business in Makati** METRO /A23
- **Half of Americans won't reelect Bush** WORLD /A11
- **Forex traders under watch** BUSINESS /B1

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

How to crack a joke

BAKIT, KORNI BA AKO?

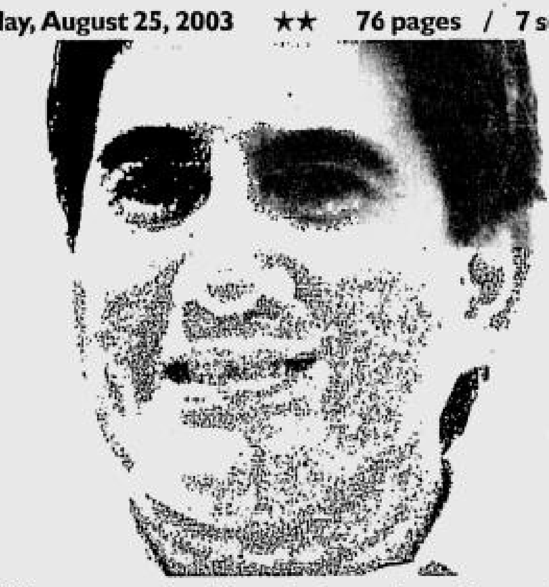
CHAPPAQUA, New York—Know your joke by heart. Don't announce in advance that it's going to be hilarious. And never say, "But seriously ..." when you're finished.

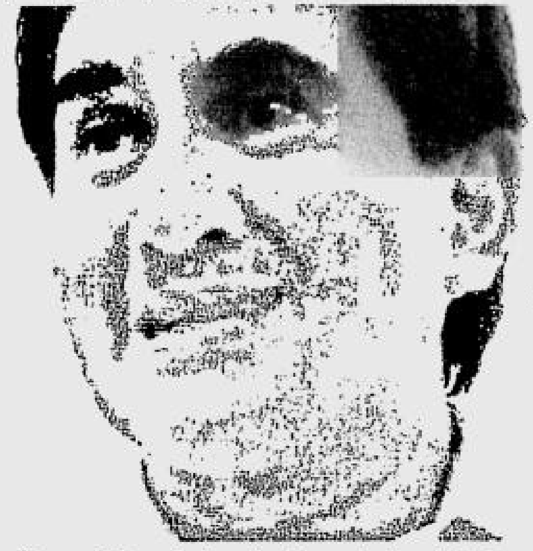
If you can't tell a joke—or if you don't know any—help is

HOW/A19

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Monday, August 25, 2003 ★★ 76 pages / 7 sections / vol. 18 / no. 258 P15 . website: www.inq7.net

HONASAN: "My life as a renegade, as a coup plotter... is over ... my accusers do not take my word for it."


"It's a very good weight-reducing regimen. You eat fast, you move fast."


"I appeal for sobriety, justice and a level playing field."

PHOTOS BY FE ZAMORA/INQ7.NET

I'm a victim of my past, says Gringo

Senator tells of life on the run in meet with newsmen

By Fe Zamora, *Inq7.net*

HE LOOKED trimmer, younger and well-rested—proof that life on the run has been good to perennial suspected coup plotter Sen. Gregorio Honasan.

In a clandestine interview on Saturday with several reporters on the outskirts of Manila, Honasan said his days as a renegade were long over, but accusations that he plotted a failed coup against the President have driven him again into hiding.

"It's a very good weight-reducing regimen. You eat fast, you move fast," Honasan said.

Since disappearing nearly a month ago, he has moved from house to house, traveling around in vans with tinted windows and sometimes alone with a helmet on his favorite Suzuki motorbike, an aide said. He runs his Senate office and checks on his family in cell phone calls brief enough to avoid being traced.

"It's tiring. Sometimes it almost drives me to tears, but what can I do?" Honasan asked. The interview was held in a room with no windows and lit by faint yellow bulbs.

"I categorically say that my life, if I can help it, as a renegade, as a coup plotter, as rebel is over. But it appears that my accusers do not take my word for it."

I'M A VICTIM/A18

Jose Pidal probe won't include 2 SC justices

TWO Supreme Court justices whom opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson implicated in his corruption charges against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo would not be among the 22 people the Senate would be investigating.

This was the view of Jose Manuel Diokno, general counsel of the Senate blue ribbon committee, the lead committee in the legislative chamber's inquiry into the allegation against the First Gentleman that he laundered more than P200 million in campaign contributions to his wife.

"Considering the doctrine of separation of powers, Diokno opined that the committee has no jurisdiction to investigate the charges against the two Supreme Court justices implicated by Senator Lacson," said a statement released by the office of Sen. Joker Arroyo, chair of the blue ribbon committee.

Lacson, who has announced his plan to seek the presidency in next year's election, did not identify the two Supreme Court justices when he delivered a privileged speech last week against President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband.

He said the two justices were among the frequent callers of the First Gentleman in his office at the LTA Building on Perea Street in Makati City.

Senator Arroyo announced that the blue ribbon committee would adopt a framework submitted by Diokno for its inquiry into the allegations of Lacson.

In the committee's assessment, Lacson

JOSE/A20

Bacani back, appeals for forgiveness

By Blanche S. Rivera

IN HIS first public appearance since a former secretary accused him of sexual harassment, a calm and cheerful Bishop Teodoro Bacani told a large El Shaddai crowd that he had returned to the country to be "reconciled with everybody."

Bacani said he came back with the willingness to forgive his accuser and a greater appreciation for the people who stood by him during trying times.

Asked for a message for his 35-year-old former secretary who had accused him of hugging and kissing her in his office, he said: "I hope I will be reconciled with everybody, and that at the end of this, because we are all children of God, we will learn to forgive and be forgiven."

The bishop concelebrated Mass at the 19th anniversary rites of El Shaddai in Rizal Park on Saturday night. He is the spiritual adviser of the Catholic charismatic group.

Bacani said his presence was meant to thank El Shaddai leaders and members for their unceasing prayers and love.

Around one million people from all over the country camped out for the overnight celebration attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo and some Cabinet members. "They have always been there, and I know how to be lifted up by their prayers, by their love," Bacani said.

"I know I don't deserve this. It is the mercy of God and the mercy of people that is uplifting. It feels good to be loved even though you feel that you don't deserve that love," he added.

El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde has backed Bacani all throughout, saying there was no way that the bishop would sexually harass

BACANI/A18

CONTROVERSIAL Bishop Teodoro Bacani is greeted by staff members before officiating at yesterday's El Shaddai prayer rally at the Quirino Grandstand.

RANDY HORMILLOSA

Big Mike gets help from Brother Mike

By Blanche S. Rivera

IN THIS season of mudslinging, the words of El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde may not soothe the frayed nerves of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

But these could be taken as statement of support for Arroyo whom opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson has accused of amassing more than P200 million in unspent campaign contributions to Arroyo's wife when she ran for vice president in 1998.

Velarde said the allegations against the husband of President Macapagal-Arroyo were unverified.

The El Shaddai leader said people should just await the results of the inquiry into the alleged hidden wealth of the First Gentleman.

"It shows only that the political season is on again," Velarde said in an interview at El Shaddai's 19th anniversary rites in Rizal Park in Manila on Saturday evening. Around one million people camped out at the park for the anniversary.

Velarde said President Macapagal deserved a break from the controversies hounding her family.

The President and some Cabinet members, including Interior Secretary Jose Lina and Agrarian Reform Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan, attended the overnight celebration.

Velarde said the President's presence did not have political color and that he would not allow his group to be used by any politician.

"This is not the time for politics. We should stop politicking

BIG MIKE/A18

2 social workers get heroes' burial

By Volt Contreras

A RIVER tragedy last week has brought to the surface the heroism of two social workers in war-struck areas in North Cotabato and Maguindanao.

In life and in death, Michael Borromeo and Ma. Teresa Marquez were immersed in the hardships and enduring culture of the people they chose to serve.

As night fell on Barangay Bago-inged in Pikit on Aug. 16, the old women began offering food on the banks of the treacherous Rio Grande to persuade its "spirits" to release Borromeo and Marquez from the depths that swallowed them earlier that day.

The two drowned after a military speedboat ferrying them and 13 others capsized at around noon that Saturday. Borromeo's body was finally recovered on Monday morning, and Marquez, on Tuesday morning.

Borromeo, an information officer of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, was buried in Cotabato City two days ago as "a hero who died in the line of duty," said Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman, who was one of the eulogists.

Marquez, who worked for the Manila-based Save the Children Foundation, was likewise honored in her burial yesterday afternoon, also in Cotabato City, Soliman told the INQUIRER in an interview.

"Today, we read all kinds of news about people proclaiming themselves saviors of this country," Soliman said, recalling what she told the mourners. "But here are two heroes who don't land on the front page but are the ones who deliver hope to our people and bring out the best in the Filipino."

Both just in their 20s, Borromeo and Marquez were with a group of relief workers who were delivering foodstuff and beddings to families rebuilding their lives after spending almost six months in the evacuation camps.

2 SOCIAL/A18

Senate now an asylum for political assassins

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE SENATE, as a republican institution, has a long history of political assassinations, dating back to the Roman Republic. The most gruesome of these assassinations was that of Julius Caesar, who was murdered in March 44 BC in the Roman Senate by Cassius and Brutus.

Already then, the Senate, ever jealous of its powers being reduced by successful military leaders like Julius Caesar, was a conspiratorial body. In his book, "The 12 Caesars," Michael Grant narrates: "As the slayers brandished their daggers around their screaming victim, only two out of all the senators who had recently sworn to protect him tried to intervene; and they tried in vain."

The senators, who composed the Roman oligarchy, feared the accumulation of dictatorial power by Julius Caesar after his conquest of Gaul. Their fears were expressed by Cicero, who wrote to a friend that "all power has been placed in the hands of one man."

Grant points out in his book that each of the 12 Caesars "depended for his throne and his life upon the army, which was indispensable for the defense of the empire."

"Another ever-present danger faced the Caesars from the Senate," writes Grant. "For centuries this body, although technically no more than advisory, had been the real head of the republican government, advising the state offi-

SENATE/A18

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Western Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/08/25/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Senate gives moribund Cha-cha renewed hope

By Carlito Pablo

THE CAMPAIGN for Charter change resumes in earnest today, when the Senate plenary debates on constitutional amendments finally get under way.

Speaker Jose de Venecia, the leading advocate of constitutional change through a constituent assembly, said yesterday that Senate President Franklin Drilon had "committed the schedule for the full plenary discussion" of measures to amend the Constitution.

"Constitutional reform is part of a series of stabilization measures. It is the last hope of the nation," De Venecia said, apparently referring to the political fallout from the July 27 failed coup.

Drilon, in a phone interview, said opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara, chair of the committee on constitutional amendments, revocation of codes and laws, will sponsor a committee report that recommends the convening of a Constitutional convention.

Drilon acknowledged that De Venecia had requested the upper chamber to calendar the sponsorship of the Charter change resolution. "There is a committee report, so I requested the majority leader to have it calendared," Drilon said.

Angara's panel also recommended that the election of convention delegates be held simultaneously with the May 2004 elections.

De Venecia welcomed Drilon's decision, which renewed his hopes for Charter change. "It is the mother of all reforms that will calm down the nation and put an end to threats of coup or destabilization and the large-scale migration of Filipinos to other nations," he said.

De Venecia had earlier said that if a decision by both houses of Congress to amend the Constitution is not reached by Sept. 12, when Congress goes on recess, any move to amend the Constitution will have to wait until 2010.

Drilon's action comes almost six months after the House approved by a solid majority Concurrent Resolution No. 16, which seeks to convene both chambers of Congress into a constituent assembly.

De Venecia said the House position has "won bipartisan endorsement" even from opposition senators like Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III.

De Venecia also said that the measure has the support of Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., whom the Speaker described as a "relentless advocate of federalism."

Despite his committee's vote, Angara is also in favor of a constituent assembly, the Speaker said.

Rep. Antonio Eduardo Nachura (LP, Western Samar), chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, said that although senators prefer a Constitutional convention, they can still be won over in favor of a constituent assembly.

"We hope the majority of the senators, when they start debate on the floor on the Angara committee resolution, will eventually realize that the most practical and best response to recent developments will be a constituent assembly and not a Convention," Nachura said.

Nachura said that an assembly can ensure the swift passage of amendments in time for the 2004 elections.

The constituent assembly measure enjoys the support of both De Venecia's ruling Lakas party and its coalition partner, businessman's Eduardo Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition.

With a report from Christine Avendaño

Solons press probe against Lacson

THE TABLES are turned, again.

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who has accused First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo of money laundering, has to deal anew with similar charges made against him earlier.

Administration Rep. Monico Puentevella yesterday urged the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) to investigate Lacson's reported $2-million bank accounts and assets in the United States, based on the information previously provided by US authorities.

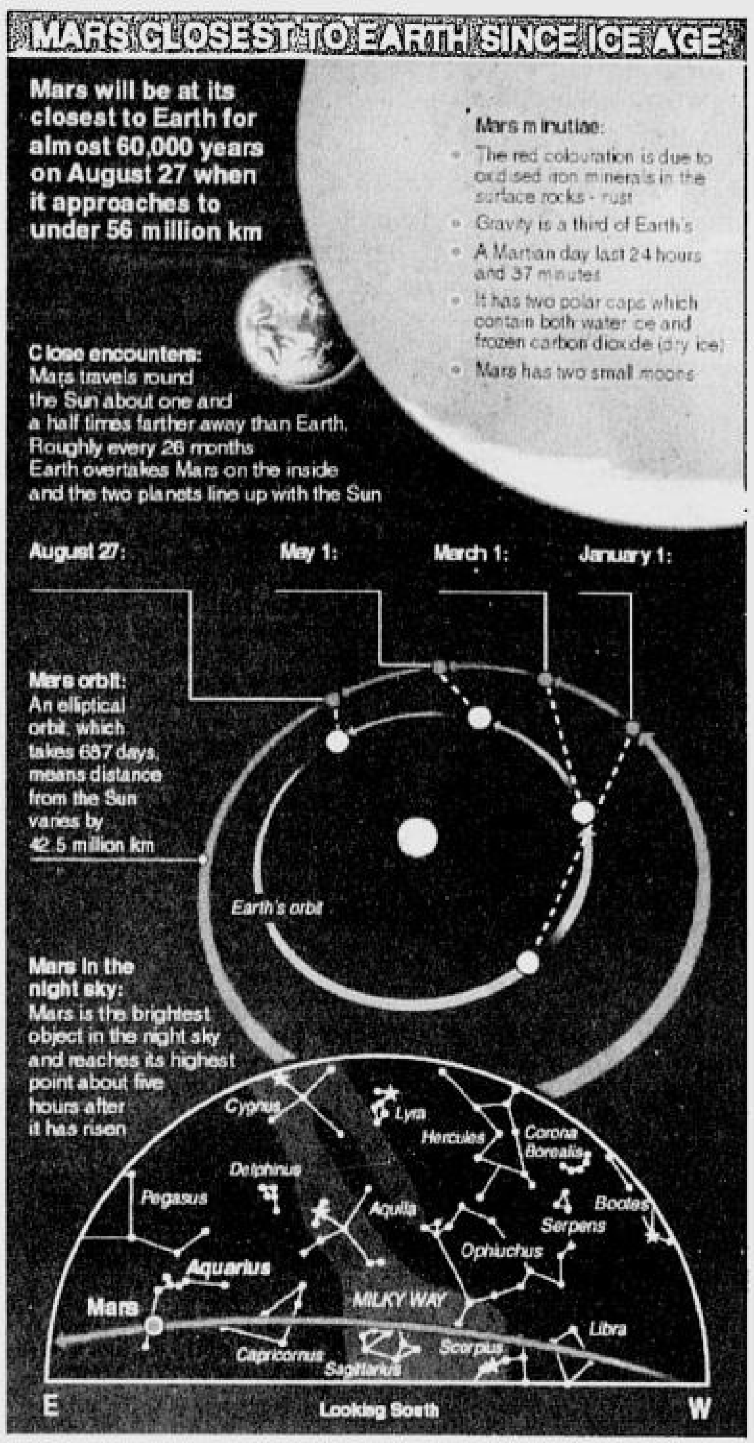
In a statement, Puentevella said the US Attorney-General had furnished local authorities the information as early as March and April 2001, through the RP-US Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty.

He said the "official submissions" to the justice department showed that Lacson had amassed "some $2 million in assets ... stretching back to before and during his term as Philippine National Police chief," and that these were now stashed away in the United States.

Lacson's "unexplained wealth ... as documented by the US government," and evidence of his reported involvement in drugs gathered by three Senate committees, warranted a "full probe" by the AMLC, the congressman said.

Citing the same US report which, he said provided "telling evidence," Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez said Lacson should be "true to his word" and resign as senator, as he promised when the case first surfaced. *Carlito Pablo with Christine Avendaño*

MARS CLOSEST TO EARTH SINCE ICE AGE



Mars will be at its closest to Earth for almost 60,000 years on August 27 when it approaches to under 56 million km

Mars minutiae:
- The red colouration is due to oxidised iron minerals in the surface rocks - rust
- Gravity is a third of Earth's
- A Martian day last 24 hours and 37 minutes
- It has two polar caps which contain both water ice and frozen carbon dioxide (dry ice)
- Mars has two small moons

Close encounters: Mars travels round the Sun about one and a half times farther away than Earth. Roughly every 26 months Earth overtakes Mars on the inside and the two planets line up with the Sun

Mars orbit: An elliptical orbit, which takes 687 days, means distance from the Sun varies by 42.5 million km

Mars in the night sky: Mars is the brightest object in the night sky and reaches its highest point about five hours after it has risen

REUTERS

DIAGRAM charting the orbit of Mars and Earth and highlighting their positions on Aug. 27 when the two planets will be closer than at any time in the past 60,000 years. A map of the night sky indicates where Mars will be visible.

Earthlings will see 'Red planet' Aug. 27

By Norman Bordadora

ON Wednesday evening, get out of the house and gaze at the eastern sky. If the monsoon clouds clear up at the precise time, you'll be seeing red—a bright crimson "star" last visible from Earth in the same magnitude around 60,000 years ago.

The planet Mars will be on its closest approach to Earth in exactly 59,540 years, according to the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Service Administration (Pagasa).

Mars and our own planet Earth will be only 55.7 million km apart.

"The last time this happened was on Sept. 12, 57537 B.C.," said Science Undersecretary Florentino Tesoro.

The next closest approach is expected on Aug. 28, 2287.

Mars is usually a "morning star" as it rises above the horizon just a few hours before dawn. On Wednesday, it will be visible on the eastern sky starting at 8 p.m. until dawn, bigger and redder than usual, and shining brighter than the brightest star in the night sky, Sirius.

It will become clearer in the days ahead, scientists said. Amateur astronomers started seeing Mars up close as early as June.

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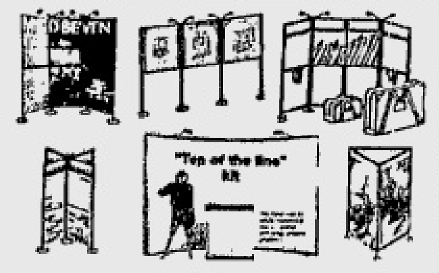
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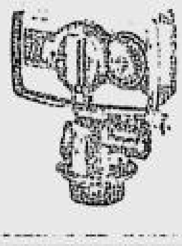

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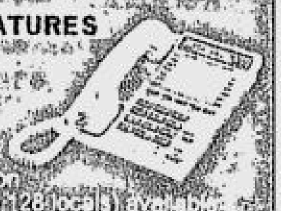

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1. Which food chain recently brought back the twister fries?
   a. KFC
   b. Jollibee
   c. Burger King
   d. McDonald's
2. Who is the female news anchor of TV Patrol?
   a. Korina Sanchez
   b. Karen Davila
   c. Sheryl Cosim
   d. TinTin Bersola
3. Which brand of clothing did not originate from the Philippines?
   a. Guess
   b. Giordano
   c. Levi's
   d. All of the above
4. What is ABS-CBN's current daily noontime show?
   a. Eat Bulaga
   b. SOP
   c. MTB
   d. ASAP
5. Which boyband is the latest endorser of Pepsi?
   a. F4
   b. N'Sync
   c. Blue
   d. Backstreet Boys

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Investors may wait for regime change

By Carlito Pablo

THE JULY 27 failed coup could be the start of a "perilous campaign for the forthcoming national elections," a situation that will adversely affect the investment climate in the country, according to a policy paper by the House think-tank, the Congressional Planning and Budget Department.

The 28-page paper, issued in August and entitled "Reviving Investments in the Country," noted that there were two major factors adversely affecting investment decisions.

These are the high cost of doing business such as high wage rates and electricity costs, and "the set of identified business risks" which include the unstable political condition and the poor peace and order situation.

The CBPD said that the military rebellion staged at the Oakwood Premier hotel in the Makati financial district, has had a major effect on the country's investment climate.

"The July 27 mutiny, although limited and short-lived, further dampened investor confidence and weakened the stability of the current administration," the paper said.

Political risks

"As this may be partly politically motivated, it may signal the start of a perilous campaign for the forthcoming national elections which increases political risks," the CBPD said.

As the elections could bring about a possible change in administration with an accompanying change in government policies, investors could very well adopt a wait-and-see attitude until a clear agenda is set by the new administration, the CBPD said.

It urged Congress and the Executive to continue to work for the passage of legislation aimed at improving the country's investment climate even as national attention is shifting to the 2004 elections.

This would signal continuity of reforms to investors, the House think-tank said.

At the same time, the government must ensure that the elections will be honest and peaceful and pursue "good and effective governance."

Curb corruption

"The government must show that it has a definite plan to curb corruption to level the playing field," the CBPD said.

"Law enforcement and administration of justice must also be improved," it said.

The CBPD noted that gross domestic investments in 2002 amounted to P205 billion and at constant 1995 prices, these have not surpassed the 1997 level of P235 billion.

Foreign direct investments amounted to $1.8 billion in 2001 but when compared to other countries, this level is barely ahead of Vietnam which posted $1.3 billion in FDI.

GMA's best defense: good governance

GOOD governance will be President Macapagal-Arroyo's best defense against all the criticisms thrown against her, according to deputy presidential spokesperson Ricardo Saludo,

Saludo said some sectors have accused the President of a lot of things and her only reply was to show her steadfast efforts in weeding out corrupt practices in government.

Good governance also dictated that the President does not meddle in the affairs of the First Gentleman who has been accused of alleged illegal activities, he said. Ms Macapagal has vowed not to interfere in any charges brought against her husband.

Proof positive

In an interview with RMN radio, Saludo said the ongoing lifestyle check by the government on public officials and employees was proof that the government was serious in having good governance in the bureaucracy.

Investigators have initially targeted the allegedly most corrupt agencies—the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs, and Department of Public Works and Highways.

The lifestyle checks have so far netted a dozen officials from the BIR, Customs and DPWH who have been charged with unexplained wealth before the Ombudsman.

But the ongoing investigation has been marred by controversies involving agents belonging to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and Customs officials.

CIDG officials are angry over allegations they tried to extort money from a Customs official in exchange for favorable findings.

Strong evidence

"Name names," a fuming SPO1 Darlito Dar yesterday dared deputy collector Jaime Maglipon.

Maglipon who flunked the lifestyle check claimed that CIDG agents had demanded P5 million from him.

"The truth is, he's very afraid because he knows that our evidence against him is very strong," he said.

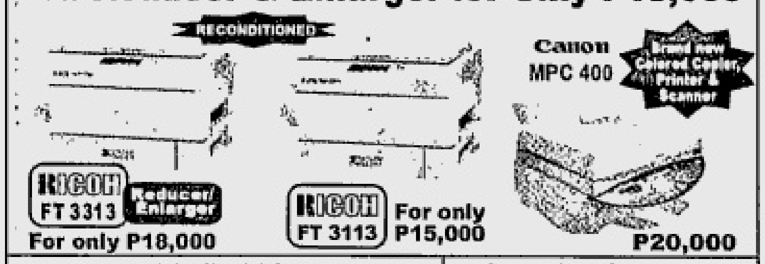
Meanwhile, Interior and Local Government Secretary Jose Lina Jr. yesterday denied corruption charges against him.

Lina claimed that he was the poorest Cabinet member and that his house in Xavierville, Quezon City was purchased very cheaply several years ago.

"I can't even buy a golf set nor join a golf club. The golf set I have right now is a gift given to me by my friends and I only play golf when given a sponsorship," Lina said. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christian V. Esguerra and Nelson Forte Flores*

CORRECTION

IN YESTERDAY's issue of the INQUIRER, the front-page caption misstated the location of the Magapit suspension bridge in Gattaran (not Gataran as spelled in the same caption). The bridge is located in Lal-lo town, also in Cagayan province. We regret the error.



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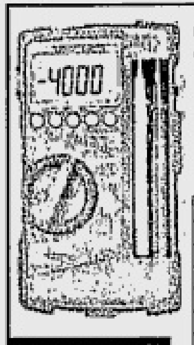

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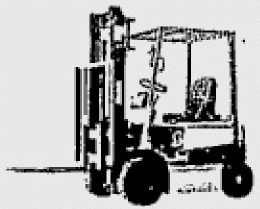

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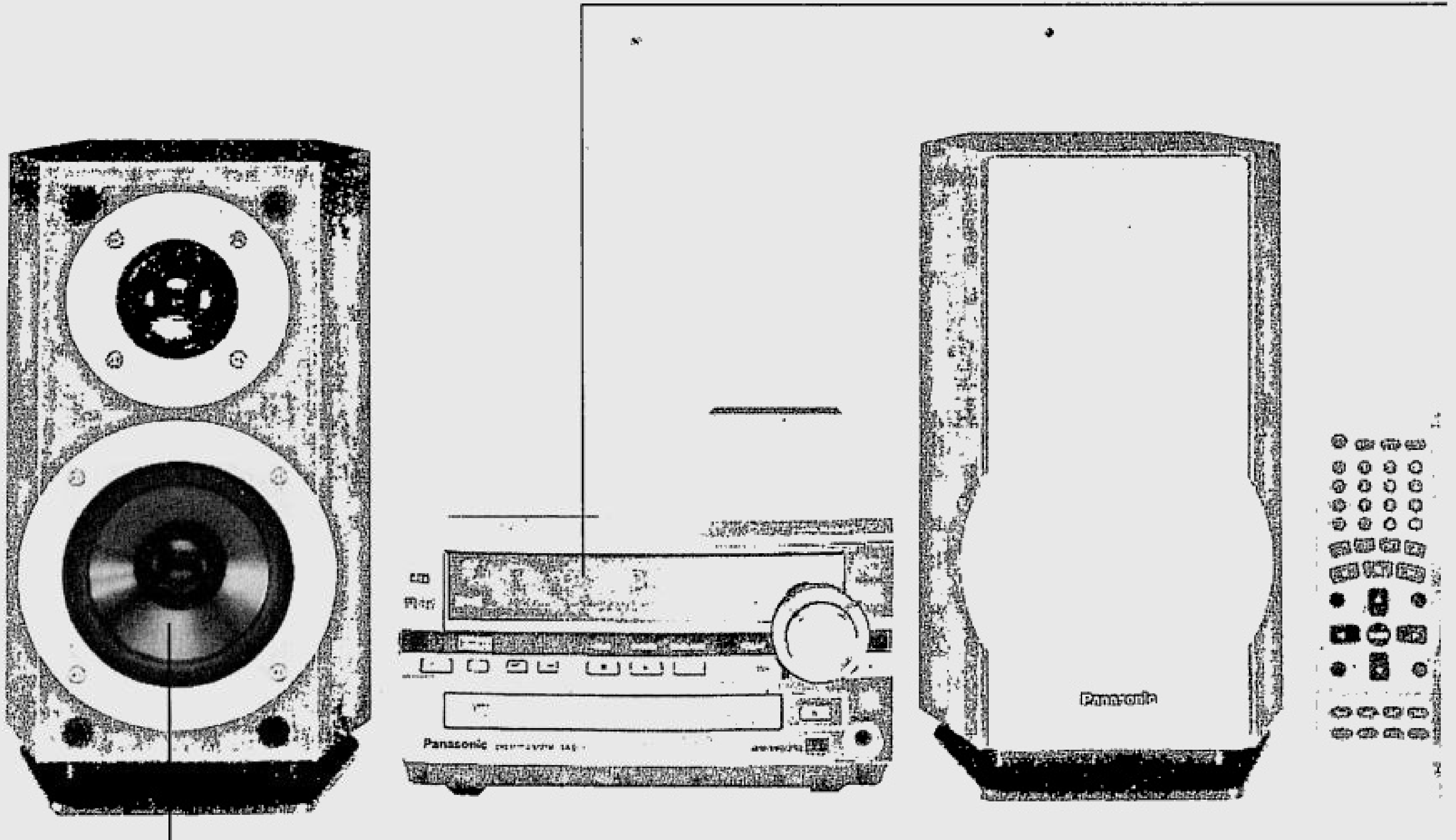

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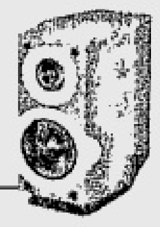

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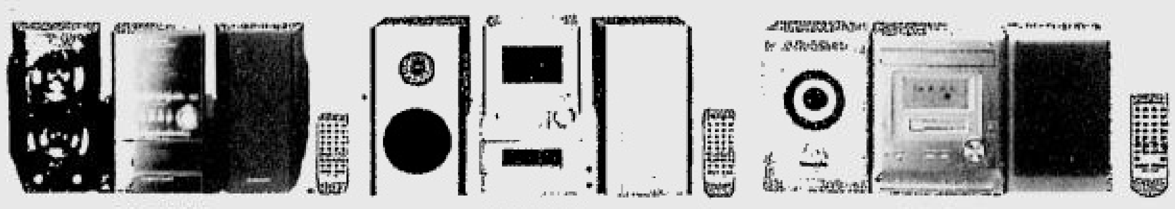

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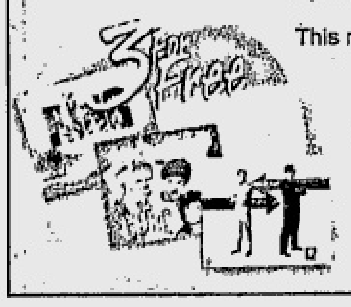

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RP to US: Give us Hambali

THE GOVERNMENT has asked the United States to turn over captured Indonesian terrorist Riduan Isamuddin, a.k.a. Hambali, to face trial here in connection with the bombings of December 2000.

The US may just grant the request and hand over Hambali, but where could he be detained?

Acting Foreign Affairs Secretary Franklin Ebdalin, in a news conference over the weekend, said "there are many jails here."

But the escape of another Indonesian suspect in the 2000 bombings, Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, last month has placed the country's capacity to keep the suspects securely in jail into question.

Ebdalin said the Philippines has asked that Hambali, who was captured in Thailand and is now under interrogation by US authorities, be turned over after he is tried for the October 2002 bombings in Bali, Indonesia. *Gerald Lacuarta*

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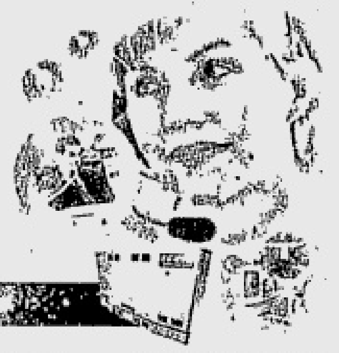

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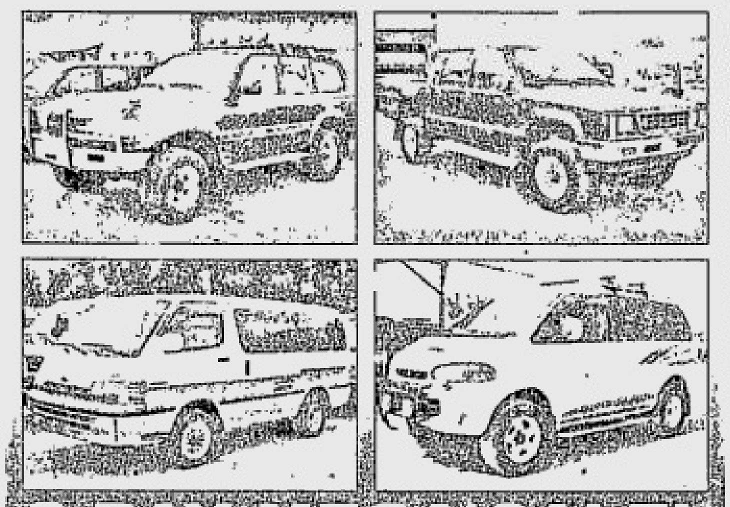

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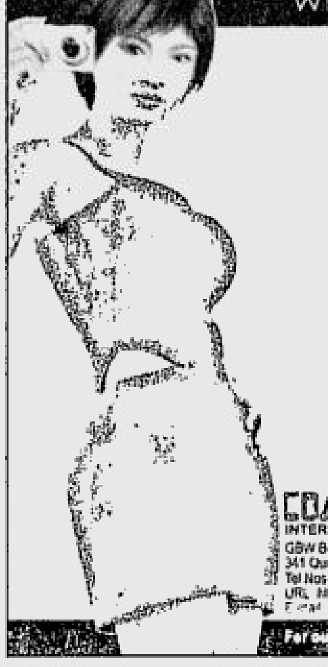

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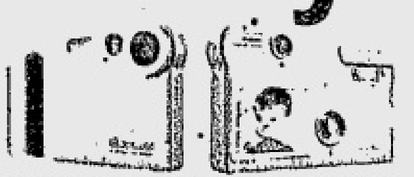

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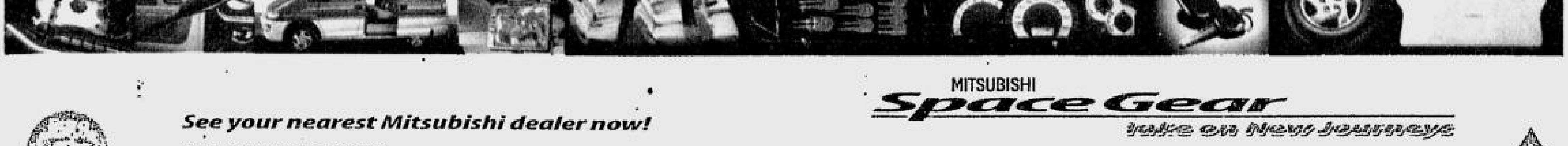

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Al-Ghozi feared sneaking into Sabah

SANDAKAN, Malaysia—Malaysian security forces said there had been four attempts by terrorists from the Philippines to sneak into Malaysia's eastern Sabah state, including one possible try by escaped Jemaah Islamiyah bomb-maker Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, a senior police officer said yesterday.

Muhamad Yassin Yahya, fifth brigade commander, said however that all the attempted incursions were prevented due to the increased presence of security forces and their constant patrol of the eastern coastal waters of Sabah on Borneo island.

"We admit having heard of many attempts by terrorist groups to enter the country via the Sulu Sea and Sandakan but they failed because of tight Malaysian security," Muhamad Yassin said.

Sabah police chief Ramli Yusuf said security forces had been placed on full alert following the arrest of alleged terror kingpin Hambali in Thailand on Aug. 11.

"Our security forces have taken precautionary steps and are constantly on the look-out especially after the Bali bombing incident and the current political conflict in southern Philippines," he said.

Police believe Al-Ghozi, believed to be a JI leader, could have been one of the Muslim militants who tried to enter Malaysia, Muhamad Yassin said.

Al-Ghozi's escape from a Camp Crame prison last month was a setback for the regional fight against terrorism and raised the threat of attacks across Southeast Asia.

Al-Ghozi had been serving a 17-year jail term for explosives possession. He had earlier admitted to plotting bomb attacks against Western targets in Singapore and led Philippine police to an explosives cache hidden in the south.

The Philippine National Police in Davao City meanwhile said there had been more frequent exchange of information with their counterparts in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, as the two countries intensify the hunt for JI members.

Chief Supt. Isidro Lapena, police chief for Southern Mindanao, said the exchange has been focused on the identification of JI suspects.

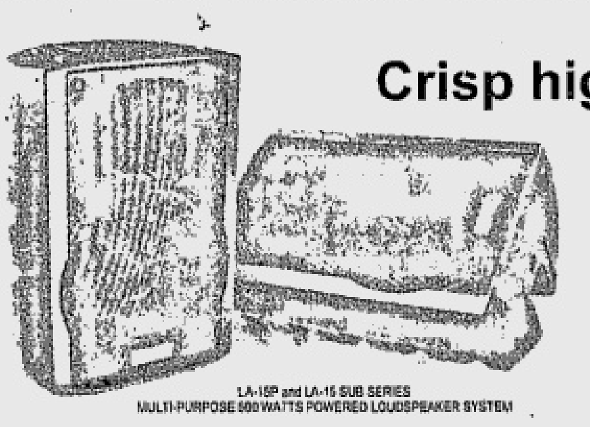
Earlier this month, there was an exchange of visits between North Sulawesi police and the PNP in Davao City.

The JI, which has been blamed for a series of bombings in Indonesia, is believed to be the Southeast Asian cell of the al-Qaida international terrorist network of Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden.

Mahmud said the the police are coordinating closely with Indonesian officials who come to visit communities in the south where there are Indonesian nationals.

There are about 7,500 Indonesians in Mindanao. In Davao City, there are about 300 Indonesians. Indonesian presence is also believed to be heavy in General Santos City and Sarangani.

AFP and PDI Mindanao Bureau



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Ordoñez asked to release findings on Al-Ghozi escape

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHATEVER happened to the investigation into the escape of Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi and the two Abu Sayyaf bandits from Camp Crame?

Having been tasked by Malacañang to complete its investigation within 30 days, the Ordoñez Committee has yet to make public its findings. The deadline expired on Aug. 17.

Director Eduardo Matillano, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, said he was hoping that the body would release its findings soon.

Earlier, he expressed optimism that the body, headed by former Justice Secretary Sedfrey Ordoñez, would uphold the CIDG's findings on the escape.

Before being gagged, Matillano and his men filed charges against a police colonel and five other officers.

The CIDG's prime suspect then was Supt. Reuben Galban, sacked chief of the Intelligence Group's Foreign Intelligence Liaison Office, who was spotted at the IG's old building at the time of escape. He was suspected of driving the fugitives out of Camp Crame.

Persida Acosta, the lawyer of accused jail guard Ronald Palmares, yesterday urged the commission to release its findings.

"It's been more than a month and we haven't heard from them," she said.

Acosta, who heads the Public Attorney's Office, was expecting that like the CIDG, the commission would also pin down Palmares.

"It doesn't really matter what the commission will say about Palmares because everything will boil down to the court case," she said. "The findings of the commission will just be 'recomendatory.'"

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Monday, August 25, 2003
21st Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	1 Thes 1:2-5, 8-10
Gospel:	Mt 23:13-22

Jesus said, "Woe to you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door to the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor do you allow others to do so.

"Woe to you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel by sea and land to win a single convert, yet once he is converted, you turn him twice as fit for hell as yourselves.

"Woe to you, blind guides! You say: To swear by the Temple is not binding, but to swear by the treasure of the Temple is. Blind fools! Which is of more worth? The gold in the Temple or the Temple which makes the gold a sacred treasure? You say: To swear by the altar is not binding, but to swear by the offering on the altar is. How blind you are! Which is of more value: the offering on the altar or the altar which makes the offering sacred? Whoever swears by the altar is swearing by the altar and by everything on it. Whoever swears by the Temple is swearing by it and by God who dwells in the Temple. Whoever swears by heaven is swearing by the throne of God and by him who is seated on it."

Commentary

Jesus pronounces his "woes" on the Scribes and Pharisees, calling them "hypocrites." The word "hypocrite" has a very curious origin in Greek. It's made up of two words, hypo and critein, which, taken together, could mean "judging over and above." And that precisely was one of the most serious problems of the Scribes and Pharisees. What made them hypocrites was not their showy kind of religiosity. It wasn't even the fact that they laid heavy burdens on both themselves and others. Rather it was the fact that they, in Jesus' words, have mistaken the trappings of religion for the truth of religion itself, and see themselves as the only ones who deserve to be called, righteous and holy ones, thereby looking down on all others who fail to measure up to their standards. Religion is about worshipping God with all one's heart and loving one's neighbor as one loves oneself. Religion is about relationship—right relationship, with God and neighbor. It isn't about rituals and practices. In fact if these hinder one from the real point of religion, one shouldn't hesitate to give them up. After all, at the end of the day, there's but one question that God will ask us, "Did you love me in those who needed you most?" Woe to him who says, "When Lord, did I see you in need?"

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Militants bare secret US basing rights deal

MILITANTS yesterday claimed that a new agreement granting basing rights to United States military forces here will be signed during the forthcoming visit of US President George W. Bush in October.

The "top-secret deal" was supposedly hatched between foreign affairs officials and former US ambassadors who visited the country last week, the militant Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said.

"This new RP-US military bases agreement is a top-secret deal waiting for the official signatures of President Macapagal-Arroyo and US President George Bush this October," said Gerry Albert Corpuz, Pamalakaya information officer.

Corpuz said the US officials included former US ambassadors to Manila Richard Solomon, Nicholas Platt, Stephen Bosworth, Richard W. Murphy and Frank Wisner, and retired US Army Gen. Robert Sennewald.

The US officials who are said to be here to facilitate the peace talks with the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

But Corpuz accused the US of using its "facilitating role" in the peace talks "to carry its sinister agenda of establishing military bases in the South."

Corpuz said the US wanted to establish facilities to house its troops coming from its military base in Okinawa, Japan.

"It is obvious that it is where Washington is driving its agenda in Mindanao," he said.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople, who is in China on a three-day official visit, could not be reached for comment.

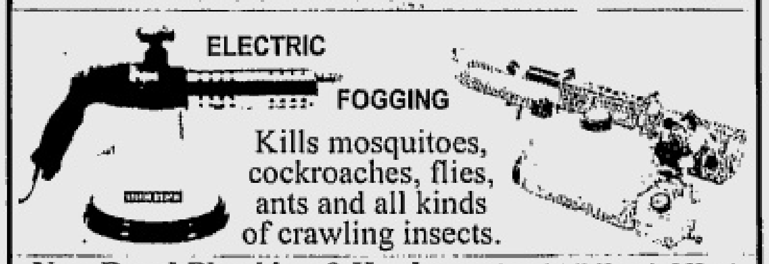
Corpuz said the basing agreement was hatched secretly, much like the Mutual Logistics and Support Agreement and the RP-US Treaty of Non-Surrender.

The MLSA was approved by Malacañang and Washington last year as an executive agreement, while the RP-US Treaty of No-Surrender, which was approved this year, gives US troops immunity from suit and prosecution for war crimes as defined by the International Criminal Court.

As this developed, a Church group said yesterday that there will be no red carpet welcome for Bush when he visits the country in October amid reports of frenzied preparations in Malacañang for the visit.

In a statement, the Promotion of Church People's Response (PCPR) said that they will roll out instead a "black welcome" for Bush.

The group will stage a "Bush Unwelcome" protest actions where anti-war church activists will parade a long black cloth to symbolize the "people's mourning" over the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. *Gerald Lacuarta and Alcuin Papa*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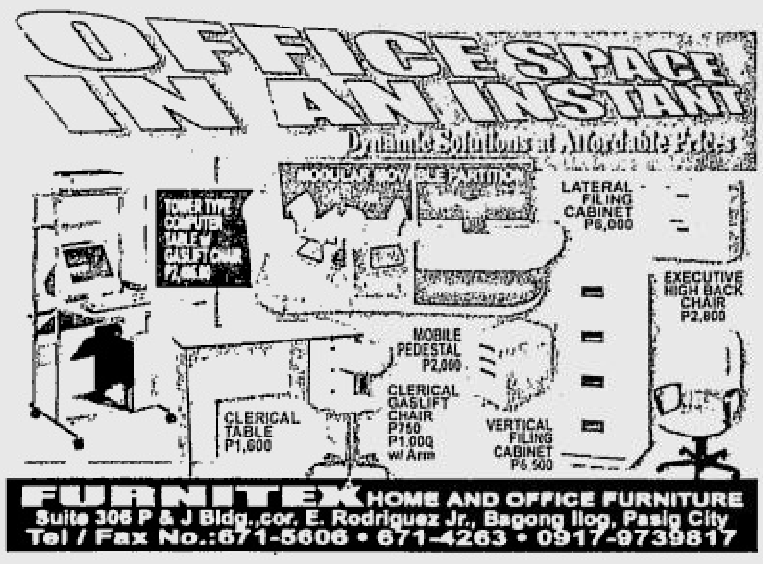
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• Northern Luzon (Cooyeesan Hotel Plaza, Naguilian cor. Asin Rds. Baguio City) - September 6 (5pm)
• Metro Manila (Music Warehouse, Quezon Blvd., Sampaloc, Manila) - September 13(5pm)

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OPINION

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Lawyer fetish

EDITORIAL

THE ATTEMPT by Swiss lawyer Patrick Foetish to claim the $683 million in Marcos Swiss accounts on behalf of the five foundations he said he represents is not only absurd on its face. It drags lawyers of his kind to new lows of disrepute.

Arriving in Manila for a one-day visit last week, Foetish said he came to "block any effort (by the Philippine government) to get the accounts in escrow if no judgment is rendered based on a trial." The money in the Swiss bank accounts is in the name of the Maler, Arelma, Aguamina, Avertina, and Sandy foundations, of which Foetish is a board member.

But the Swiss counsel gave the game away when he overreached and made the startling claim that the Marcoses "have nothing to do with the foundations."

This argument is, well, as full of holes as Swiss cheese. Foetish assumes that all Filipinos have short memories, or do not understand the workings of the Swiss judicial system, or cannot read the decisions of the Philippine Supreme Court for themselves. Why else issue a statement that runs directly counter to both the historical and legal record?

Akbayan party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales, a human rights victim during the Marcos regime, has recalled that in 1999 Foetish signed a proposed undertaking to pay $150 million to the 10,000 documented martial law victims, as settlement of their compensation claims. That same proposal, Rosales said, also bore the signature of ex-first lady Imelda Marcos, "representing the Marcos interests in the said foundations."

Former Solicitor General Francisco Chavez has pointed out that, in a series of "eight or ten decisions," the Swiss Federal Court ruled that the foundations were actually "fronts or dummies" for the Marcos family and that the deposits in the bank accounts were acquired illegally.

Commissioner Victoria Avena of the Presidential Commission on Good Government has said it was already "too late" for the foundations to intervene. "How can they intervene when the decision has been made by the courts?" she asked. The Supreme Court voted only last July 15 to forfeit the bank accounts, held in escrow by the Philippine National Bank, in favor of the government. The decision was based, in part, on the former first lady's admission that she enjoyed beneficial ownership of the accounts.

All of these, and more, are on the record. Why would Foetish go to the extreme of arguing that the Marcoses "have nothing to do" with the five Swiss foundations? Obviously as an attempt to distance himself and the foundations from the Marcos family. That is his problem; the attempt at triangulation is all too obvious.

Listen to the sound of a patent lie being stretched beyond believability. "I read in an article that the Marcos family moved to block government efforts to get hold of the $683-million Swiss accounts at the PNB," Foetish said. "That's funny because the Marcoses cannot do that since it's not their problem. They're not part of the foundation."

If that was funny, why is no one laughing?

By protesting too much, Foetish works against the very suspension of disbelief that every work of fiction requires.

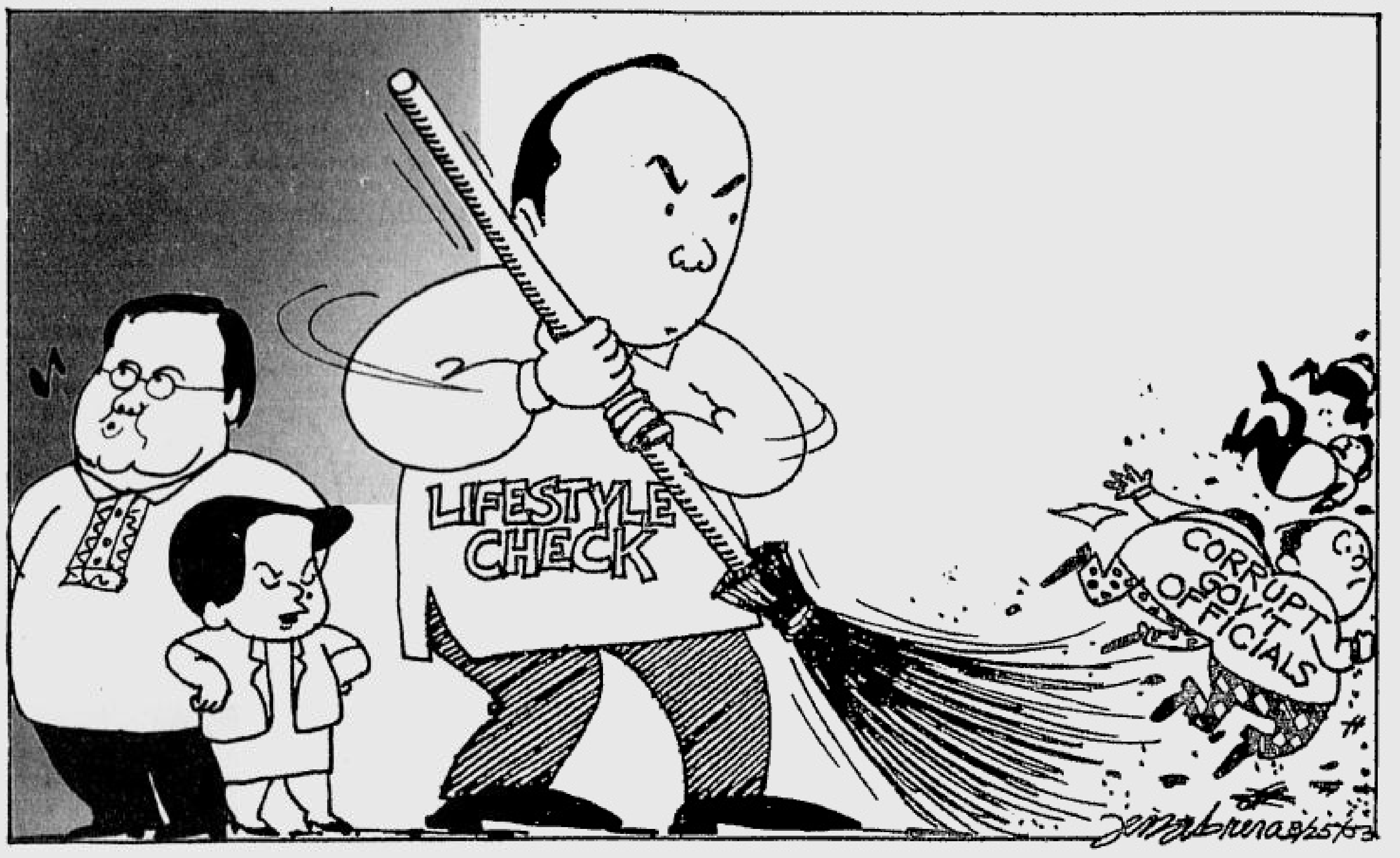
The day after his claims made news, PCGG Commissioner Vyva Aguirre retorted. "Who are his principals? He's obviously doing this for the Marcoses."

The Swiss lawyer's visit, in fact, has reportedly been hosted by millionaire businessman Greggy Araneta, husband of the youngest Marcos daughter Irene.

Foetish's folly demonstrates the absurd lengths that irresponsible lawyers can go to to win a case.

The adversarial legal system assumes that lawyers who lose a case must, at a certain point, agree that they have lost. By accepting defeat, say at the appellate level, lawyers allow the entire system to gain closure. Otherwise, as journalist Janet Malcolm has observed, there will be no end to lawsuits.

Foetish does not only refuse to accept defeat at the hands of the highest courts of both the Philippines and Switzerland. He now peddles a story which blithely contradicts his own actions of only four years ago. By doing so, he gives a whole new meaning to the principle of legal fiction.



PNP report, GMA statement not credible

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

LIKE I said before, the analysis of the signatures of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and Jose Pidal should be done neither by the Philippine National Police nor by the National Bureau of Investigation but by independent experts abroad, preferably unidentified until they shall have completed their job so they won't be subjected to pressure. Look at the conclusion of the PNP that the two signatures were those of different persons: nobody believes it. Even if NBI experts come out with similar findings, nobody would believe them either. And even if the two police agencies produce a dozen angels swearing that Mr. Arroyo and Jose Pidal are not one and the same, they won't be credible.

For how can the PNP and the NBI report that, yes, the Jose Pidal signature was made by Mr. Arroyo even if that is their honest opinion? If they did that, they would be out of jobs the next day. I am not saying that the police handwriting experts are lying. For all we know, they are telling the truth. But the public just won't believe for reasons already stated.

The speed with which the PNP came out with its report only bolsters the suspicion that it is "*lutong makaw.*" Everything moves so slowly in the government, including in the PNP, but this time the report came too quickly. Almost as if there is a hurry to preempt contrary findings.

The police experts said the signatures are similar because there was a "strong attempt to copy the signature of Mr. Arroyo." Now, why would anybody do that? Why would Jose Pidal, if he is a real person, want to copy the signature of Mr. Arroyo?

Besides, there are too many coincidences, circumstantial evidence, lawyers would call it. Jose Pidal's given address is the same as the office of Mr. Arroyo. They have the same financial adviser, not to say similar signatures. But they have never met. They don't even know each other. And Pidal is the surname of one of Mr. Arroyo's great-grandfathers.

And where is Jose Pidal, if he is not a figment of somebody's imagination, like another Jose, Jose Velarde? The National Statistics Office has no record indicating that Jose Pidal ever existed. But he owns millions of pesos in bank deposits. He stands to lose all that money if he doesn't show up to claim it. The government can confiscate it. So where is he?

*

On the other hand, it is unfair and unsporting of Sen. Panfilo Lacson to single out certain persons seen going into the building where Mr. Arroyo's office is. There must be thousands of people going in and out of that building every day. What's so special about the visitors he named in his privilege speech? Among them are columnists who have written pieces against him, and Mary Ong, a principal witness in the kidnapping and money laundering cases against him. Is this Lacson's way of getting back at his tormentors?

At the television show "Debate" on Channel 7 last week, some of these Arroyo visitors explained why they went to see him. Marissa Bondoc, wife of columnist Jarius Bondoc, said she asked Mr. Arroyo's help for protection because her family was getting death threats. Mary Ong said she asked him for financial help for her cancer-stricken parents. She said she had already gone to Pagcor and other agencies but got no help. Mr. Arroyo gave her P18,000, she said, but her father died just the same. Columnist Alex Magno said it was Mr. Arroyo who had asked for his help, and that is why he went to his office.

Columnist Rina Jimenez-David asked why people go to Mr. Arroyo for help when he is not a government official and does not run any government agency.

Answer: Because he is seen as an extension of the President, almost as powerful as his wife. In fact, it is generally known that a number of appointees to money-making government agencies like Pagcor, the Public Estates Authority, Light Rail Transit Authority, Sweepstakes, etc. are his cronies. Coincidentally, again, some of these agencies have been accused of anomalies, such as, overpricing.

Shouldn't we do something now, Rina asked again, to separate relatives from the presidency to avoid suspected meddling and influence peddling by presidential relatives in government affairs, like what Mr. Arroyo is accused of doing?

Good question. Through the years, many presidents have been struck down by the perceived meddling of their relatives. President Quirino had his brother Tony. President Diosdado Macapagal, GMA's father, also had his brother "Star" Macapagal. President Marcos had wife Imelda and brother-in-law Kokoy; President Aquino had her "Kamaganak Inc."; President Ramos had his alleged lover; President Estrada had his mistresses and sons, and now President Macapagal has her Mike.

The President's statement that she is married to her country, that she won't lift a finger to help Mr. Arroyo in defending himself and that he has to fend for himself, may sound good but it is not credible. At Dong Puno's talk show on Channel 2, I was asked whether Mr. Arroyo's problems cannot be separated from the President.

I replied that from the public's point of view (and that is the important thing in governance) they cannot be separated. For they are man and wife, bound together like Siamese twins. That is why there is such a thing as "conjugal partnership."

Scientific

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

OVER THE PAST week, I've been looking at some of my signatures. I can say for certain that there are about a dozen points of divergence in any two of them. My "C" is never the same in any two signatures. Sometimes the curvature would be full, sometimes flat. Sometimes the break in the upper portion would be clearer, sometimes not, so that the "C" looks like an "O." Sometimes the signature would be long, sometimes short.

The divergences are particularly marked in my signatures then, when my hair was still salt-and-pepper, and now, when the pepper has abandoned the salt, such is life, or time. Then I wrote the Quiros with a sloppy "Q" followed by an undulating line, now I write it with a sloppier "Q" followed by a straight line. The divergences are still more marked when I write my name with a healthy hand and when I write them with a wrist or finger assailed by an eternal affliction. On the latter occasions, it's all I can do to get by with a scrawl. I can assure people that when their hands throb with exquisite pain, applying pressure on it by scribbling is the last thing they want to do.

The people who have been asking for my signature every time I entertain them in forums (eat your heart out, Jose Pidal) may wish to compare what they have with one another. I'm sure they will find a hundred points of divergences in them and be tempted to believe some of them actually came from my doppelganger, the fellow who has been usurping my identity for some time now. Some might even say I have been desperately trying to forge myself.

I am not a handwriting expert, but I do know that no two signatures coming from the same person will always be identical. There will always be points of divergences between them, particularly when the person is suffering from one affliction or other or when he signed his name five years ago and today. But there are enough scientific means to determine that those signatures, points of divergences or not, came from the same hand.

Dr. Mely Sorra, the chief examiner of the PNP Crime Laboratory is a handwriting expert. She says her skills in that respect and those of her people are unquestionable. They routinely submit their findings to the court, and their findings are accepted as scientific evidence by those courts. Even the FBI and the British Scotland Yard would agree with them, she says, because they use the same methods in handwriting analysis.

So, do we take it that their findings—"At first glance, the signatures appear the same, but they are not; it is possible that there was a strong attempt to copy the First Gentleman's signature"—are final?

Not at all.

Sorra, for all her scientific credentials, forgets something very basic about the scientific method. That is objectivity. The problem with her findings is not that she lacks skills, it is that she lacks independence. There is a bit of a difference between the FBI and Scotland Yard, on one hand, and the PNP, on the other, which we can determine scientifically from historical record. That is the fact that the FBI and Scotland Yard are autonomous organizations which do not mind investigating First Families (though even the FBI has been used on occasion by US presidents to do ugly things, such as break into opposition headquarters in Watergate); the PNP is not. If the PNP shows anything, it is that it is hostage to the whims of the PNP chief, who in turn is hostage to the whims of the boss who appointed him.

Lacson should know. He ran it like a fiefdom during Erap's time. It can no more be expected to discover anything wrong with the President—or her husband—today than it could be expected to discover anything wrong with Erap during Lacson's time.

In that sense, I am more scientific than Sorra. I do not have more scientific training, but I have more scientific distance. Galileo had even more scientific skills than me, but even he had to concede the earth was flat and was the center of the universe when threatened with being turned into *lechon* by the Pope.

No, the scientific course would be to turn the signatures over to the FBI and Scotland Yard. And see if they agree with the PNP. That's what would make it final.

As it is, however, Sorra, in clearing Mike Arroyo of wrongdoing, raises an intriguing scientific question—though finding the answer to it is not likely to land anyone the Nobel Prize for Science. That question is: Why in God's name would Jose Pidal want to forge the signature of Mike Arroyo?

Think about it: You are in the possession of P20 million in the bank, probably more. Until someone named Ping Lacson came along to question your very existence, nobody knows you or about you. You are not just rich, you are anonymous, which is good in a country teeming with kidnappers and extortionists, some of them in the form of BIR collectors. Given all these blessings, why in God's good earth would you take it into your head to deposit money in a bank and "make a strong attempt to copy the First Gentleman's signature"? You do that and the First Gentleman might take it into his head, too, to withdraw money from your account while making a strong attempt to copy your name.

Could the account have been made by people trying to ruin the First Gentleman? Well, this is the first time I heard people mount a ruse like that, using P20 million, probably more in sting money. I know this is a rich country trying to be poor, as someone said, but I don't know it is that rich. But if no one wants to claim the Jose Pidal account, I am most earnestly volunteering for it. Over the past days, I have been practicing writing "Jose Pidal" in the way it appeared in Lacson's presentation.

Again and again, scientifically.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@info.com.ph

Lina's macho politics

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's statement in Baguio City last weekend that she is "married to our country" is viewed as an effort to distance herself from the problems bedeviling her husband Mike Arroyo. She's doing the right thing, as the First Gentleman truly ought to defend himself. The curious thing is that while Mr. Arroyo attracts controversies the way a lightning rod attracts lightning, the charges don't seem to affect GMA—she's the one with the Teflon coating, to the great frustration of her political enemies.

GMA's distancing stance is read as an indication that she's serious about running in 2004, but that could only aggravate the attacks against her from self-declared presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson, who obviously seeks to eliminate her from the race by eroding her moral base.

* * *

Distancing themselves from their controversial PMA classmates Senators Gregorio Honasan and Lacson is what a bunch of PMA '71 alumni, led by the three contenders for the top PNP post—Deputy Directors General Edgardo Aglipay, Reynaldo Velasco and Virtus Gil—is trying to do. These alumni are calling on Honasan to come out of hiding and face the charges against him, and on Lacson to bring Mr. Arroyo to court instead of trying him by publicity. News reports quoted Aglipay as saying that some 40 to 50 PMA '71 alumni are poised to affirm their support for the Macapagal administration. Such support may be crucial to settling the issue of succession to the PNP post now held by Director General Hermogenes Ebdane, as there's talk that the President is hesitant to name any one of the three Class '71 contenders because of their possible affinity to their ambitious classmates.

But it's obvious that Honasan and Lacson do not command the class' entire loyalty. Then, too, this is not the first time that an entire class controlled the leadership hierarchy but remained firmly loyal to the duly constituted authority. For instance, there was a time when PMA's Class '57 held 27 positions of responsibility in the Armed Forces, beginning with AFP Chief Renato de Villa, Army Chief Restituto Padilla, Navy Chief Tagumpay Jardiniano, Coast Guard Chief Carlito Cunanan, the J-1, J-2, J-3 and J-7, as well as all the commanders of the major area commands, including the biggest, Southern Command, under Maj. Gen. Cesar Tapia, and several Army divisions. But there was never any hint of a coup plot by them—in fact, they defended the government in several failed coup attempts.

* * *

Last Aug. 21, the 20th anniversary of the martyrdom of Ninoy Aquino, brought together veterans of the anti-Marcos protest movement, of which one of the most prominent figures was a young UP-trained lawyer named Jose Lina. His booming voice from his barrel chest always ensured him the job of emcee in innumerable anti-Marcos rallies. Even then, I thought Lina was very courageous as he denounced the dictator in colorful Filipino.

During the spontaneous rally at the Edsa Shrine on the night of Jan. 16, 2001, Lina was among the first to stoke the rally fires even before the sound system arrived; over the next three days of Edsa Dos he was among those who kept the rally going. Weeks earlier, as second-term governor of Laguna and president of the League of Governors, he was the first ranking official in the Estrada administration to resign following Chavit Singson's exposé of Erap's massive wealth from *jueteng* activities.

* * *

In recent weeks, Lina has been at the forefront of the Macapagal administration's efforts to stabilize the republic following the Oakwood rebellion and to prosecute its military and civilian/political components. He was also the first official very early on to term the rebellion a coup d'etat because of its mixed cast of characters and power grab agenda; at that time, most politicians were tiptoeing over this subject, but he saw the total picture and realized it was a *kudeta*; his declaration raised eyebrows.

Lina was also the only official to call Sen. Gregorio Honasan a "threat to national security" right in the Senate hearings, two days after the Oakwood rebellion, in front of his protective colleagues. After Lina finished his testimony, some senators tried to make him prematurely disclose some still classified details, but the lawyer in him refused to be cornered. Lina's Senate testimony was straight-shooting macho politics at its best in a chamber where most senators hemmed and hawed over the rebellion, or at best, were having a delayed and confused struggle over where loyalty to a colleague ends and loyalty to country begins.

* * *

After the Edsa Revolution, Cory Aquino named Lina Metro Manila governor. He later ran for two terms as senator and then governor of Laguna, one of the most prosperous provinces, twice heading the League of Governors. As Senate justice committee chair, he sponsored the law authored by Senate President Jovito Salonga that made the coup d'etat a crime under a civilian court, punishable by *reclusion perpetua* or death. As interior secretary, Lina has been at the forefront of the anti-*jueteng* and now the anti-illegal drugs campaign of the government. Through his long years of public service, his name has been untainted by scandal, and the criticisms that come his way emanate from what appears to be a gross misreading of the controversial "Lina Law" on rent. He is one of the most under-appreciated members of the Macapagal Cabinet, but perhaps it's time to focus the limelight on this quiet, persistent plodder for a possible higher office, instead of investing on *ampao* celebrities or notorious characters.

A barrel of worms

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

NO matter how the public may now perceive the five leaders of the Makati mutiny—their tarnished idealism, damaged credibility, incompetence in spoken English, etc.—their accusations, however incoherent, have opened up a whole barrel of worms.

Many of these issues have been public knowledge for sometime now; mostly the stuff of speculation, but almost none has been spoken of, except in whispers. Until now.

If there is anything good that has come out of this alleged coup attempt so far, it is that the worms have been let out, by no less than those who knew of their malevolent existence first-hand.

The allegations are very serious—which is, of course, an understatement. And at once unbelievable and frightening: the selling of arms and ammunition to the enemy; the Davao bombing; corruption. There are the earlier allegations of collusion with the Abu Sayyaf; smuggling; illegal logging; even drug trafficking and other venalities.

Much earlier there were the published reports, though not proven, that certain top military officers, in the interest of their logging activities, had a role in organizing the Abu Sayyaf, or, at the least, encouraged its existence.

Against this backdrop are the unsolved murders of those other young officers who saw and dared to tell, though tragically, only to a very few.

The mutiny and subsequent hearings were of special interest to us in Mindanao because most of the alleged acts of corruption were committed here, with the never-ending conflict providing the situation conducive to wrongdoing.

But what most caught our attention in Sulu were the disclosures of Marine captains Danilo Luna and Ury Pesigan who accused top officers of the Southern Command of selling guns and ammunition to Hadji Bagis Ahmad, former mayor of Panamao and former field commander of the Moro National Liberation Front (not MILF as earlier reported).

Bagis was one of the so-called "Magic 8," the first batch of MNLF commanders who "returned to the fold of the law" in the early 1970s.

The inventory of war matériel delivered to Bagis, as enumerated by Luna, was astounding: "16mm recoilless rifles; mortar rocket launchers; .50-caliber machineguns; high explosives. The reenactment of the delivery, though merely done through computer graphics, was no less shocking.

A day or two later, a former Southcom commander, retired Gen. Romeo Padiernos, admitted in a television interview that it was he who had ordered the delivery to Bagis. In justifying his "decision," Padiernos said that Bagis headed a "paramilitary group" and needed assistance to fight presumably lawless elements.

To those who have no idea as to the protagonists and the ground situation obtaining here, the story sounds plausible enough. But the general's narrative, intended to clarify the matter, made the situation more confusing and raised more questions.

The other protagonist according to Padiernos was Hadji Abdul-kadil Estino, former mayor of the town named after his grandfather, Panglima Estino. He is the son of the mayor he succeeded, Hadji Ma-as Bawang who, like Bagis, was a former MNLF field commander and also a member of the Magic 8; and the brother of former Vice Gov. Hadji Munib Estino.

Padiernos related that the two were brought to a conciliatory meeting by MNLF chair and former ARMM Gov. Nur Misuari, but that Estino had "arrogantly" walked out of that meeting.

From Padiernos' own account, what we see is not a paramilitary unit in dire need of assistance from the Southcom in repelling the Abu Sayyaf and kindred souls. As clear as it can get, this was no more, no less, than a shooting feud between two warlords, each with a formidable number of followers.

Which brings us to the most logical conclusion: the delivery was made to the favored protagonist to provide him with more arms to fight the other.

Is Southcom in the business of aiding protagonists in shooting feuds? What are the factors that make them take which side? Were the arms and ammunition "given" as claimed by Padiernos? If so, why? Or were they sold? If so, is that legal? And for how much? And how much of these guns and explosives found their way to the Abu Sayyaf?

These are very, very disturbing questions. And they demand answers, certainly more urgently than the mystery of why Lt. (s.g.) Antonio Trillanes IV failed to file his statement of assets and liabilities for two straight years.

And to pursue our questions further, how many such deliveries have been made and to whom? By whom? But the most troubling and chilling question is: how many soldiers and innocent civilians have been killed by these same high-powered firearms?

These questions may never be answered; we don't expect them to be. Regardless, we have found our own answers through the haze.

Now we know why the so-called Mindanao conflict has gone on for decades. Now we know why it will never end. Now we know why many, many more of us will get killed.

Whether the Oakwood mutineers will be convicted no longer matters in the whole scheme of things. In their so-called adventurism, whether intended or not, by opening up this stinking barrel, they have made us see forever.

And if only for that, the Oakwood mutiny was, as far as we are concerned, well worth it.

* * *

Comments to nm19@mysmart.com.ph

Gloria must run to legitimize Edsa II

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

GLORIA Macapagal-Arroyo declared on Rizal Day, Dec. 30, 2002:

"In view of all these factors, I have decided not to run for President during the elections of 2004. If I were to run, it would require a major political effort on my part. But since I am among the principal figures in the divisive national events of the last two or three years, my political efforts can only result in never ending divisiveness. On the other hand, relieved of the burden of politics, I can devote the last year and a half of my administration to the following: First, strengthening the economy, to create more jobs, and to encourage business activity that is unhampered by corruption and red tape in government. Second, healing the deep divisions within our society. Third, working for clean and honest elections in 2004."

Yet, it is precisely the "never-ending divisiveness" that we have reaped from her withdrawal from the 2004 national elections, not any "healing of deep divisions." It is a sign that her decision not to run must be reversed, in view of all these factors:

Gloria must run because the 2004 national elections will surely be about the legitimacy of Edsa II itself—that most divisive root of recent national events—in which Gloria was not only a principal figure but the direct political beneficiary. She must stand for election to defend the integrity of the institutions and individuals that acted together in Edsa II—the Church, the Supreme Court, the military, the political establishment and civil society.

Sen. Panfilo M. Lacson, in delivering his "Incredible Hulk" speech on the floor of the Philippine Senate, may have fired the first powerful shot of the election race and served notice that he is indeed a serious contender for President. Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander when it comes to graft and corruption; so, there is exquisite irony to the possibility that the First Gentleman is guilty of using a false identity to conduct large financial transactions as alleged by the senator. Ping can evoke powerful resonances with a public so cynical that their unwritten motto about all politicians is "A pox on all their houses."

So, there can be no healing of deep divisions without Gloria courageously standing for the people's judgment on the second time they were led to the Edsa well of people power and made to drink of its heady liquor.

Gloria must win the people's explicit ratification of what happened so as to dispel all doubt as to the sovereign will regarding the disposition of one Joseph Estrada, a man literally on trial for his life, (alleged to be a venal life of plunder, philandering, inebriation and corruption, but hugely popular with a very large group of citizens and voters). She must win their mandate to take the nation in the direction she has chosen.

I honestly do not know what the Filipino people will say. But no matter who runs and who wins, the 2004 elections will decide, in the court of the people's ultimate sovereignty, whether it was a legitimate exercise of "people power" (or whatever Constitutional God one worships) to remove on Jan. 20, 2001 a duly elected President and replace him with a duly elected Vice President at the Edsa Shrine—as when Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide swore in Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo following Joseph Estrada's aborted impeachment trial and three days of massive demonstrations calling on Estrada to voluntarily resign.

I do not know who will run and who will win. But I do know that by June 30, 2004, when they inaugurate a President for the rest of this decade, the Filipino people will have either ratified or abjured the twice-rendered unanimous decisions of the Supreme Court in the case Estrada vs. Arroyo (March 2001) that gave juridical legitimacy to Edsa II, just as the sovereign people once ratified the consequences of Edsa I by ratifying the 1987 Freedom Constitution of President Corazon Aquino.

All rhetoric and argumentation will receive from the people a simple "Yea!" or "Nay!" that will be final, executory and implicit in the still unknown contents of official invitations to the Luneta Grandstand for Inauguration Day 2004.

Only by winning the 2004 election can some champion of Edsa II redeem the ideals of Edsa II and rebut the accusation of evil partiality and uphold extra-constitutional judicial activism of the chief justice during Edsa II. Only the catharsis of political election can annul the charges of dereliction of constitutional duty hurled against the Supreme Court by two-bit commentators and can the Supreme Court be reaffirmed as a bulwark of democracy and justice.

I believe that by laying down "the burden of politics" last Rizal Day, the President is shrinking away from a moral duty to stand by an historic event in which many participated and were complicit. Edsa II did not happen primarily to make her President, though that was its greatest consequence. Perhaps, circumstances forced her into the presidency before she was truly ready for it. Obviously in 1998, when she slid down to the vice presidential slot; she was willing to patiently wait for her turn at the nation's helm, in the 2004 elections.

God works in mysterious ways. Here it is almost 2004. Tick tock. Gloria can and must run for President in 2004 to legitimize herself, the Supreme Court, the military, civil society, Edsa II and people power itself.

(Visit my personal web log at http://deanjorgebocobo.blogspot.com/)

Positive review, for a change

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

ARE you sick and tired of the things happening around us?

On the local front, there seems to be no end to the tales of corruption in government, grandstanding politicians and military officials who think they hold the key to our country's progress. Sometimes I wonder what crimes have we, as a people, committed to deserve this fate.

Neither is the news in other parts of the world any better. The United Nations office in Iraq was hit by a bomb that caused the death of 20 of its personnel, including two Filipinos, and injuries to countless others. Europe is beset by a heat wave that proved to be fatal to more than 3,000 people. A variation of the deadly Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome has appeared in Canada. And: no cure has been found yet for this virus.

So for a change, I am not going to write about any of the complaints I received last week from the readers. Call it self-serving, apple-polishing or what have you, but today I will go positive. I will discuss the favorable comments I got in relation to a news report that appeared on the front page of the INQUIRER last Aug. 21.

That day was the 20th anniversary of the martyrdom of Ninoy Aquino. The newspaper paid its respects to him by putting his photo at the left hand side of the front page. An excerpt of Ninoy's last letter to wife Cory was placed underneath the photo. The letter was set on a yellow background and the salutation and closing words were written in purple bold script. It gave a dramatic effect.

Medical exam

Below the newspaper fold was a picture of one of the 20 non-governmental organizations that former President Cory Aquino honored to prove that Ninoy did not die in vain. In this issue, the INQUIRER clearly showed where its sentiments lie on Ninoy's murder two decades ago.

But the newspaper did not ignore the burning issues of the day. There were reports about the unexplained wealth of some officials of the internal revenue and customs bureaus, and of the Department of Public Works and Highways, and the filing of graft charges against five of them.

There were follow-up stories on the death of two Filipinos in the bombing of the UN mission in Iraq. Rounding up the major news were the statements of Victoria and Thomas Toh whom Sen. Panfilo Lacson had accused of acting as dummies of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo for maintaining allegedly suspicious bank accounts.

Amid all these depressing news, at the top of the front page, at the right hand side of the "flag" (or the name of the newspaper), appeared the news about the results of the examinations given this month by the Professional Regulation Commission for physicians.

Bearing the head "New docs: 13 in top 10," the story announced that 1,350 out of 2,430 passed the licensure tests. The names of the topnotchers, minus their schools, were enumerated. The readers were directed to the INQUIRER's website for a complete list of the successful examinees.

Undue publicity

I was mildly surprised when I saw the news. Was I seeing things? The government test that usually receives front-page treatment in the INQUIRER (and for that matter, other newspapers) is that given to prospective lawyers. The announcement of the results of the annual bar exams has become a national ritual of sorts that never fails to attract media attention.

This fixation with the legal profession has become the subject of numerous complaints from readers who are engaged in other professions. They claim the publicity encourages the youth to study law instead of taking up courses in engineering, medicine and other professions that can contribute substantially to our progress. They have demanded equal treatment in the publication of the results of their professions' respective licensure examinations.

Another profession-related event that the INQUIRER seems to enjoy giving publicity to is the graduation rites of the Philippine Military Academy. Days before the event, the front page of the newspaper is often replete with stories about the background of the top graduates, or the difficulties they had to go through in order to get their commission to the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The complaints I receive about the INQUIRER giving undue attention to those graduates approximate those that relate to successful bar examinees. In the PMA's case, the readers' beef is about glamorizing the science of warfare when what we need are men and women who will work for peace and harmony.

The excuse usually given to justify media attention to the PMA's graduation ceremonies is because the President of the Philippines, in addition to being the guest speaker, participates in the commissioning of the new military officials.

New doctors

That almost obscure news about the latest batch of medical practitioners elicited favorable comments from some readers. They couldn't believe the INQUIRER giving front-page treatment to the results of a government exam other than for lawyers. In the past, news of this nature was buried deep in the inside pages or not reported at all.

A reader commented, "at last, the INQUIRER has realized that there are professions in our country other than the legal profession. Although the recognition that the medical profession rightfully deserves is late in coming, it's better than nothing."

A physician who gave me the impression that he has been in the profession for quite sometime expressed "the hope that the INQUIRER will, in the future, publish the pictures of the new doctors and their schools so the proper recognition can be given to their parents and the teachers who contributed to their success."

The favorable comments were a welcome relief from the critical statements I get when the newspaper commits errors in accuracy and objectivity. I read somewhere that it is easy to complain and criticize, but it takes a lot of effort to appreciate something good and convey that appreciation to the person who made that good thing possible.

I am keeping my fingers crossed that the treatment the INQUIRER gave to the new doctors will be extended to the coming additions to the other professions that require passing government licensing exams. In the meantime, let me enjoy the pleasant feeling.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City." Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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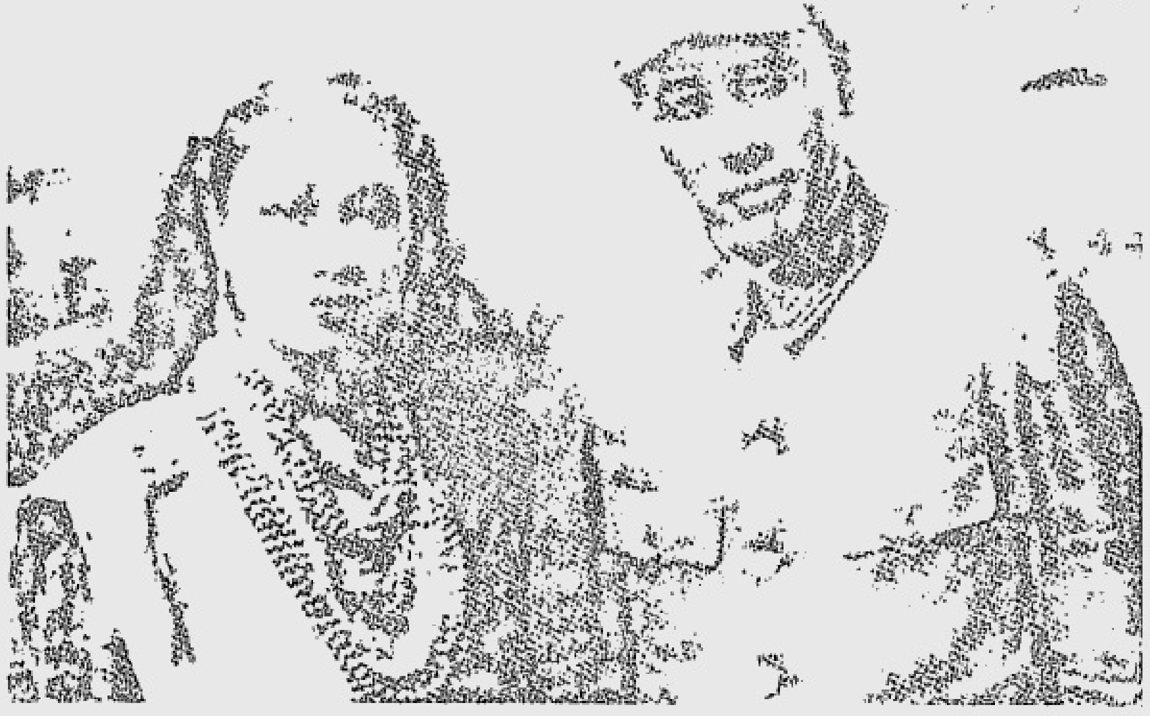
Where is Fely Corcuera Santos?



AN UNSUNG heroine, Fely Corcuera Santos is one of the Philippines' great women of World War II. Her participation in the war is untold, known to only a few, but it is a story that should be in a book to immortalize the great deeds that should have been known at least 50 years ago.

Santos was the first Filipina assistant of an American lady named Claire Phillips, alias "High Pockettes," a "Matahari," a spy for the guerrilla movement, who also secretly helped prisoners of war at the Cabanatuan Concentration Camp with medicine, food and money. During the Japanese occupation, Phillips established a night club along TM Kalaw named Tsubaki Night Club which was used as the center of the underground movement. The club was frequented by Japanese officers.

A book is being written about Phillips to make the world know of her sacrifices, and those of the people who surrounded her during those times, among them, Fely Corcuera Santos, an example of a strong Filipina with so much courage and love for freedom and her country. She was the center of espionage activity of the time. Where is she? We want to include her in this great book about Phillips. If Santos is not around anymore, we want to find her next of kin, her husband, children, brother or sister, and through them, we're sure, Santos' heroism and memories will live forever.

Through intensive research, it was found that Fely Corcuera married a Dr. Ernie Santos after the war, and they lived in Hawaii. They had two daughters named Yolanda and Melissa. One of them competed at a Miss Hawaii Contest during the 1960s. Dr. Ernie Santos is said to have gone back to the Philippines in 1980 when he retired.

Someone from Bataan, Edna Binkowski, is searching for information that will lead to finding Dr. Ernie Santos, the daughters, brothers or sisters of Fely Corcuera Santos. Also, any information regarding the Tsubaki Night Club will be a great contribution to the book.

Binkowski can be reached through cellphone number 0917-2752486, or through e-mail: endbink@mozcom.com.

—EDNA B. BINKOWSKI,
Villa Edna, 227 V. Leonor Subd.,
Limay, Bataan 2103

Ninoy and Bonifacio on the coup

IF he were alive today, Ninoy Aquino will definitely reprimand those young military officers who staged the Oakwood mutiny. Ninoy was a champion of democracy. But Andres Bonifacio will surely appreciate the actions taken by the renegade soldiers because he was for reforms through revolutionary tactics.

The young military officers have the right to voice their gripes and grievances. But the means they used were absolutely erroneous and unlawful. Granted that the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the government are corrupt, they should have expressed their outrage through the legal way. They are misguided. They took the country hostage. During the Senate hearings, they denied that a politician was behind them. But the way they carried the Oakwood adventure out, it appeared well-planned and funded.

I admire Navy Lt. (s.g.) Antonio Trillanes, IV for being audacious but I pity him for being arrogant. The nation was alarmed by that particular event.

—JERICHO R. FRANCISCO,
28 Mulawin St., Panghulo,
Malabon, Manila

Let the basic sectors speak!

POLITICAL participation is a basic human right. Democratic participation in local governance entails the rightful representation of basic and local sectors in local legislative bodies.

This is the essence of Local Sectoral Representation (LSR) mandated both by the 1987 Constitution and the 1991 Local Government Code. To this day, however, it is unimplemented. With the 2004 elections looming, it is imperative that an enabling law for LSR is adopted within the next few months.

House Bill No. 5781 or "An act Providing for the Manner and Date of Election of Sectoral Representatives to the Local Sanggunian and for other Purposes" was passed early June by the House of Representatives. However, in the Senate, the committee on constitutional amendments, revision of codes and laws, chaired by Sen. Edgardo Angara, has yet to hold a committee hearing on the Senate version of the bill.

LSR seeks to democratize people's participation in local governance with the interests of the different basic sectors being heard and acted upon. Three seats in all local sanggunians are reserved for representatives from the local organizations of the basic, marginalized and underrepresented sectors like the workers, fisherfolk, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities and women.

Once elected, sectoral representatives would have the same roles and responsibilities as existing sanggunian members. The interests of the marginal sectors will be better articulated by people who come from their ranks, thus giving legitimacy to and paramount regard for the issues and concerns of the masses.

We appeal to President Macapagal-Arroyo to act on this long overdue measure by certifying this bill as urgent and actively support its passage. The continuous involvement and active participation of the basic sectors in the development of their communities are vital to the building of a strong republic. Let the basic sectors speak!

—JOCELYN T. BELLIN,
policy research
and advocacy officer,
Kaisahan Tungo sa Kaunlaran
ng Kanayunan at Repormang
Pansakahan, 3 Mahabagin St.,
Teachers' Village, Quezon City

Squatters from Metro Manila not welcome in Cabuyao

THIS refers to the item on the alleged resettlement to Cabuyao of about 250,000 squatters from Metro Manila who are going to be affected by the modernization of the South Transit Railways (PDI, 8/11/03). Accordingly, a locational clearance has been issued by the deputized zoning administrator for the relocation scheme.

The Cabuyao municipal government wishes to clarify that it has neither committed nor entered into any contract with any government entity on said relocation.

The news as published in newspapers is based purely on speculations. The remaining vacant properties in Cabuyao, even if these are all developed, could not possibly accommodate 250,000 settlers. Also, as per records, no locational clearance has been issued for the purpose.

The relocation of settlers along the PNR track is still under negotiation between the concerned national government agencies—specifically, the Housing and Urban Development Council and the National Housing Authority—and the different local government units within the first and second districts of Laguna. The local governments are reluctant to host the resettlements, aware of the impact of absorbing settlers from different places and the attendant problems it could create for their municipalities. Different civic groups likewise object to the resettlement, fearful of an increase in crime rate and the additional strain it could have on the local government's budget for social services, as well as on the environment.

Although the local government has approved the conversion of lands for residential use, the same was done on the proposition that the squatters along the railway track and along the river banks of Cabuyao will be given priority.

Pambayang Kautusan Bilang 2003-061 (*ayon sa* P-Kapasyahan Bilang 070-2003) passed by the Cabuyao Sangguniang Bayan last May 28 specifically states: "*Nagbabawal sa mga* informal settlers *na hindi taga*-Cabuyao *na lumipat o tumigil sa bayan ng* Cabuyao *sa anumang isasagawang pabahay sa ilalim ng proyektong nasyonal* (Informal settlers who are not from Cabuyao are prohibited to relocate and stay in the any of the housing projects being developed by the national government in Cabuyao)."

—ROMUELLE B. BATALLONES,
executive assistant,
Office of the Mayor,
Municipality of Cabuyao,
Province of Laguna

National interests over personal

AS I watched and listened to the answers of the Magdalo mutineers to the questions of Sen. Joker Arroyo in the Senate investigation, I cannot help but feel disgusted and disappointed. I cannot see the reasons behind the Oakwood invasion. As a Filipino, I am tired of coups and graft and corruption in the government. I only want to live in a peaceful, loving and God-fearing country—my Philippines.

Given a choice, I would still choose to stay here. The Oakwood takeover was selfishly motivated, without thinking that bloodshed could have flowed as a result of it. The rebel soldiers saw themselves as saviors, putting everything in their hands without considering its consequences. I am not a fan of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Neither of any presidential aspirants. Much less do I admire the Magdalo officers, no matter how good-looking they are. How could they expect the people to believe in them? They broke the chain of command and they have no loyalty at all to their oath. I pray for them and other junior members of the Philippine Military Academy, and especially our government to be enlightened.

We need each other to bring peace to our country. Let us think of our nation rather than our own personal interests. May God bless our country!

—MARIA IMELDA
P. YNZON, M.D.,
Calapan City

Let us move on

THE LAND transport industry joins other concerned sectors in asking the citizenry to close ranks so we can move forward—amid all these conflicts in our society.

We should trust the government in its efforts to address legitimate grievances because unless we believe in established mechanisms to solve problems, there would be chaos and in the end, we, the people will be the loser.

The public transport sector has always maintained support for President Macapagal-Arroyo. On many occasions the President herself has called transport leaders to Malacañang to discuss problems directly with her. Right then and there, the President would work out solutions with our group.

We owe it to our children, their children and succeeding generations to set things in order today, so this country can go forward and they can reap the benefits of development. For years now, we have always been in crisis.

Let us continue to support the President's efforts to bring reforms and share in the vision of a better tomorrow.

—ALBERT H. SUANSING,
secretary general,
Confederation of Land Transport
Organizations of the Philippines,
Pier 4, North Harbor,
Tondo, Manila

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

US tightens rules on visas to defend against terrorism

WASHINGTON—Washington is tightening procedures for gaining entry to the United States and turning visas into a first line of defense against terrorism on US soil.

The nineteen hijackers who carried out the deadly attacks of Sept. 11 were all foreigners, 15 of them Saudi, who had entered the United States on tourist and student visas.

Two of them, including Mohammed Atta, an Egyptian who piloted a hijacked passenger jet into one of the towers of the World Trade Center, had an expired visa.

And several had used false identities to enter the United States.

"What we have discovered in the aftermath of Sept. 11th terrorist attacks was that the perpetrators were able to use our visa system to enter the United States with impunity and carry out their deadly mission," said Democratic California Sen. Dianne Feinstein.

In late 2001, the US Immigration and Naturalization Service admitted that it had lost track of some four million people who had entered the United States legally and then allowed their visas to expire.

More than 500,000 foreigners enter the United States each year on student visas. In the 1990s, 16,000 of them came from countries suspected of having links to terrorism, such as Iran, Iraq, Sudan, and Syria, said Feinstein, co-author of a bill on border security and visa reform passed by Congress in early 2002.

The new legislation aims to reduce the risk of infiltration by tightening procedures for issuing visas at some 200 US consulates worldwide and at airports and other ports of entry.

A better flow of information between immigration services, the FBI and the CIA, coordinated by the new Department of Homeland Security, should also enable the government to do a better job of spotting terrorists, US officials say.

Two of the 19 hijackers who carried out the Sept. 11 attacks were suspected as terrorists by the Central Intelligence Agency, but that information was not shared with immigration authorities or the Federal Bureau of Investigation, according to a congressional investigation into the attacks.

Starting in January 2004, immigration officials will take digital fingerprints and photographs of most foreigners carrying student or tourist visas upon their arrival in the United States, as part of a new system called "Visitor and Immigration Status Indication Technology System" or Visit.

About 10 million people will be entered each year into the Visit system, which should also help authorities nab visitors who overstay their visas.

Citizens of 29 countries, including EU countries, are allowed to enter the United States for up to three months without visas, but even they—some 23 million foreign visitors to the US each year—face toug her rules.

Starting in October they must present machine-readable passports, and those who do not will have to obtain a visa to enter the United States. *AFP*

Half of Americans won't reelect Bush

WASHINGTON—A growing number of Americans don't want to see US President George W. Bush re-elected next year, and fear US troops will be drawn into a long, costly occupation of Iraq, according to a Newsweek poll released Saturday.

For the first time the poll has found that more registered voters—49 percent—would not want Bush to return for a second term in office if the elections were now, compared with 44 percent who would.

Only 23 percent said terrorism and homeland security would be the most important issues for them in the November 2004 election, compared with 48 percent who said deciding factors for them now would be the economy and jobs.

Meanwhile, 69 percent are now convinced the United States will become bogged down in Iraq, without achieving ostensible goals in getting the country back on its feet.

Some 40 percent of them are now "very concerned" US troops will be there for the long-haul.

A majority also fears that US forces will be overextended in the event of a security threat elsewhere, according to the poll in the latest edition of Newsweek—29 percent very concerned and 30 percent somewhat concerned.

BUSH AFP

Americans also think that reconstruction costs in Iraq are too high at one billion dollars per week—66 percent said they do not support such spending, compared with 34 percent who said they support current spending levels.

And 53 percent said they would oppose an increase to the figure being spent, with only 7 percent not opposed to an increase.

Almost half of people polled—47 percent—said they were very concerned that maintaining troops in Iraq is too expensive and will cause a higher budget deficit, seriously damaging the US economy.

Despite some indications the US president's popularity is on the wane, a majority still approves of the way Bush is handling his job. Some 53 percent supported him compared with 36 who did not, with 11 unsure.

In a Newsweek poll released a month ago, 49 percent said they would like to see Bush reelected compared with 43 percent who would not.

Voters said they preferred Republican President Bush's stance for dealing with terrorists than what they have seen so far from leading figures among the Democrats.

Some 57 percent said they preferred Bush's position on terrorism to 21 who preferred the Democrats. But 45 percent felt the Democrats had more to offer on stimulating the economy, compared with 36 percent who thought Bush had a better approach.

The survey was taken between Aug. 21-22 on some 1,011 adults aged 18 and above. The poll has a plus or minus 3 percent error margin. *AFP*

Germany paid $16M to free hostages

BAMAKO—Germany paid a ransom as high as 15 million euros ($16.5 million) to kidnappers of 14 European hostages, released from nearly six months' captivity in the Sahara desert, sources close to the negotiations said Saturday.

"There was no way out of the situation," a source told AFP in the Malian capital. "The hostage-takers insisted (on being paid)."

"That was the only thing holding up freeing the hostages, a week before they were liberated. Berlin had to give in," the source added.

The exact amount was not revealed, but varying sources said it amounted to between three and 10 billion CFA francs (4.2 to 15.2 million euros, $4.6 million to $16.5 million).

The German government refused to comment on the reports on Saturday.

A foreign ministry spokesperson said he had nothing to add to Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer's statement a day earlier, which simply said Berlin "was pleased at the happy outcome" to the drama.

"We will not comment on anything else," Fischer had said.

A source close to the mediators said the ransom money had been handed over to the abductors at a secret location beyond the reach of mediators.

"A German personality handed over the money," he said. "He travelled via the town of Tessalit," which is located in northern Mali, near the border with Algeria. *AFP*

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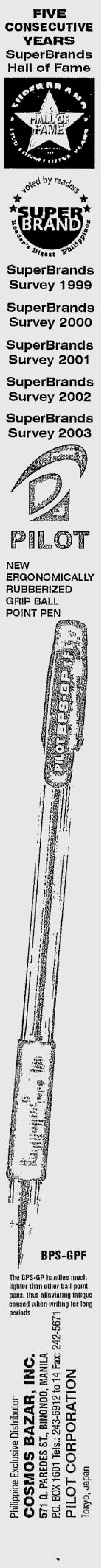

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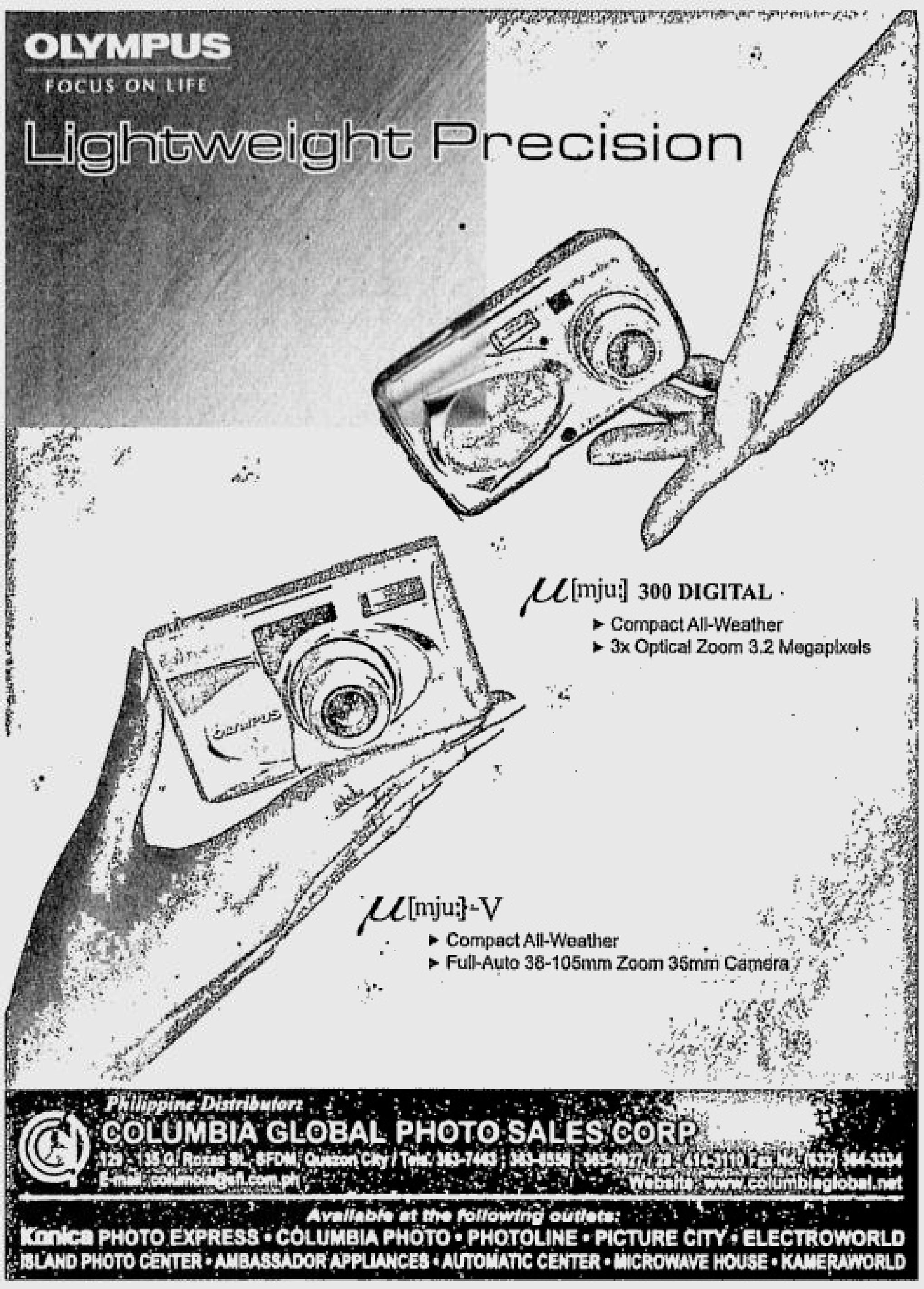
Fighting erupts in Liberia days after peace deal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MONROVIA—Thousands of civilians fled the sound of fresh fighting near Liberia's second city of Buchanan on Saturday as caretaker President Moses Blah sought to cement a peace deal to end 14 years of bloodshed.

Just days after the peace deal was signed, the West African nation's defense minister also said there was fighting around the northern town of Ganta.

"This evening, our men came under fierce attack from the rebels and there is fighting taking place around the bridge towards Ganta. I believe that they are trying to retake Ganta," Daniel Chea told Reuters.

The reports of fresh fighting in two areas underlined the fragility of the peace deal signed by Blah's government and two rebel groups, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and a smaller faction known as Model.

Southeast of the coastal capital Monrovia, men carrying bundles on their heads and women with babies strapped to their backs streamed along the main road leading from rebel-held Buchanan, trying again to outstep the bullets.

The refugees said they left their homes when gunfire and the thud of mortars echoed around an area some 80 km from Monrovia on Friday.

"There was terrible shooting. We could hear mortars. Boom, boom," said Benjamin Garkpley, walking empty-handed towards Harbel outside Monrovia.

Chea said government positions near Buchanan had been attacked by Model, but West African peacekeepers, who visited the area on Saturday, said they were told the shooting was carried out by government militias to scare civilians.

"Model were still in their positions," said Col. Theophilus Tawiah, a spokesperson for the force, known as Ecomil. "There's been no advance by Model forces."

THOUSANDS of Liberian refugees head into Cotton Tree, some 50 km from Monrovia, fleeing fresh fighting near Liberia's second city of Buchanan east of the capital, Aug. 23.

REUTERS

Fighting inside Monrovia has died down since regional peacekeepers, backed by US Marines, were deployed this month.

But for people in the hard-to-reach interior, the peace deal is still just a piece of paper.

The accord cleared the way for the creation of an interim government to be chaired by Gyude Bryant, a low-profile businessman seen as a consensus builder.

Blah, due to hand over to Bryant in October, succeeded former President Charles Taylor who quit under international pressure earlier this month.

The new leader went on a regional tour this week to push for a lasting peace, meeting the presidents of Ivory Coast, Guinea and Sierra Leone—all accused by former Liberian authorities of supporting rebellion inside the country's porous borders.

Guinea was named in a United Nations report as LURD's biggest supporter. Liberia had in the past accused Ivory Coast of supporting Model and Sierra Leone of supplying LURD.

Since Taylor launched a rebellion in 1989 to win power, Liberia has seen little but violence and has been the epicenter of a regional cycle of bloodshed in which around 250,000 people have been killed. Taylor is now in exile in Nigeria.

Many Liberians want the peacekeepers to swiftly push out from Monrovia and secure the rest of the country.

Reuters

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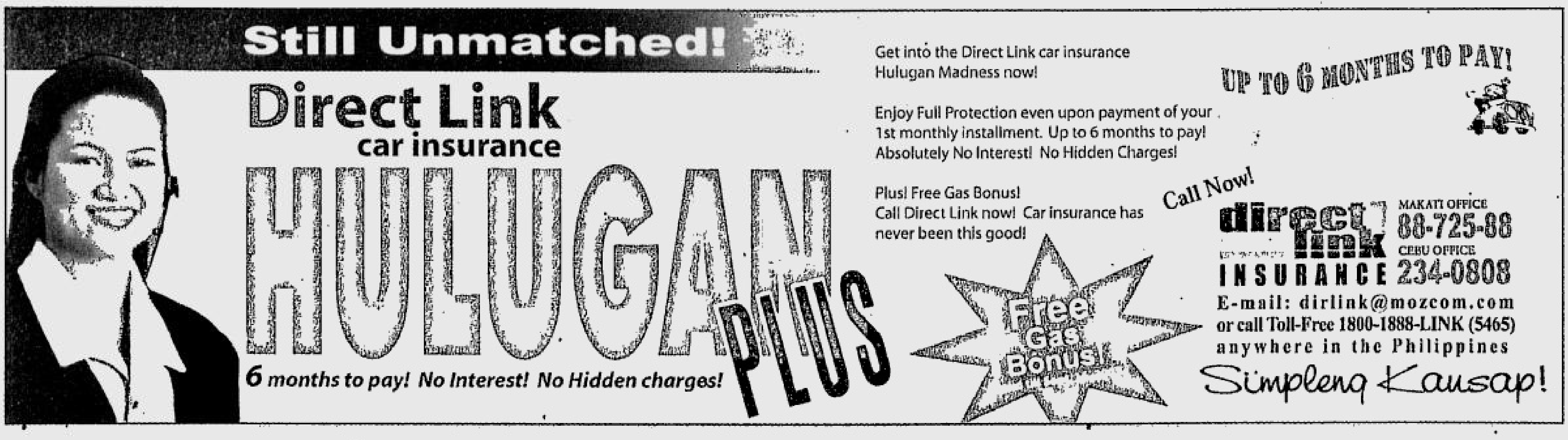
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INSURANCE INSIDER

A Special Section in Cooperation with AsianLife Financial Assurance Corporation

MESSAGES

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My warmest felicitations to the men and women of **AsianLife Financial Assurance Corporation** on the occasion of your *Companyís Launch.* I also commend the **ATR Kim Eng Group** for infusing more dynamism in the life insurance industry with its new investments through your company.

For the past few years, we have witnessed the rapid growth of the life insurance industry. The potential for growth is great and our government welcomes new companies like AsianLife that provide quality financial products and services to the Filipino people.

I trust that you would be true to the spirit of professionalism and service as you persevere to meet the needs of the Filipino consumer. May you actively participate in the growth of the life insurance industry as well as our countryís economy. Be our steadfast partner as we participate in the global economy.

Mabuhay!

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

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My warmest greetings to the officers and staff of AsianLife Finacial Assurance Corporation.

As the government strives to provide basic services to our people, it is heartening to note the continued inflow of investments in the financial arena. Insurance companies are partners of government in nation building not only for the taxes they pay, but also for mobilization of resources their products and processes enable.

Insurance is a unique kind of service where personal touch is most appreciated.. In the companyís resolve to become ever the best organization. AsianLife is committed to extend its services to its policyholders and the insurance public with exactly that.

Mabuhay!

JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO
Secretary
Department of Finance

◆

The insurance industry has always been vital partner of governments in national development.

In highly industrialized countries, monies raised from insurance premiums form an important resource for the long-term growth of capital and financial markets.

In the last two years, the Philippine insurance industry has experienced unprecedented growth in terms of assets and premiums earned. It does seem that post-9/11, Filipinos have discovered the need to prepare for a future no one can predict for certain.

The current launch of AsianLife Financial Assurance Corporation in the very competitive field of life insurance is an opportune time to take stock of the needs and wants of our countrymen. And of what we can do to respond to such needs and wants.

Our people are always served well by companies who put a premium on customer service and product innovation.

I am certain AsianLife will be up to the challenge. My congratulations to AsianLife on this new phase in its corporate life.

Eduardo T. Malinis
Insurance Commissioner

Board of Directors (L to R): Monico Jacob- Board Member, Enrique Alberto-EVP & COO, Eusebio Tanco - Vice Chairman, Ramon Arnaiz- Chairman, Manuel Tordesillas - President & CEO, Eulogio Mendoza - Vice Chairman, Lorenzo Roxas- Board Member, Modesta Mammuad - CFO & Treasurer

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Refusing to Compromise Service Levels

Bigger is not always better.

And AsianLife Financial Assurance Corporation prefers to be the better life insurance company, not necessarily the bigger one.

"The major companies just want to get ahead in terms of size and industry ranking. But such unguarded growth can mean sacrificing the little things—little but very important things like customer care, speed of service and attention to detail. At AsianLife, we have no big bureaucracies. Customers can easily reach us and we are always there for them, no matter what," said AsianLife President Manuel N. Tordesillas.

This unique customer focus is bound to differentiate AsianLife from the 40-plus life insurance companies now doing business in the country. It is also a bit of a revelation, considering the company, formerly known as All AsiaLife, was the fastest growing life insurance company in the 90s.

From 1994 to 1999, gross premiums grew from P24.6 million to P190 million. This represents a compounded annual growth rate of 50.5 percent in terms of volume in force, a feat no other company has achieved. In 1996 alone, AsianLife posted a record 600 percent increase in first year premiums.

Chief Operating Officer Enrique Alberto, who was with the original management group that engineered such spectacular growth, said growth per se is not bad, but that should never be achieved for its own sake, but always for the improvement of service quality and reliability.

"We want to be a good, responsive life insurance company, able to serve the needs of our policyholders," Alberto emphasized.

Now under new ownership, AsianLife benefits from its association with ATR Kim Eng Financial Corporation, a publicly listed financial services company with a capital base of over PhP1.7 billion.

The ATR-Kim Eng Group in the Philippines is a partnership between ATR Holdings, whose shareholders include the Gokongwei Group, the A. Soriano Group, Marsman-Drysdale, Loida Nicolas-Lewis, and Kim Eng Holding Limited, one of the largest listed Singaporean stockbrokers with an extensive presence throughout the Asia Pacific, as well as offices in New York and London.

Through this partnership, the ATR Kim Eng Group has established itself as one of the leading investment houses in the country.

Tordesillas said the AsianLife board has given Alberto full support in the company's bid to revitalize itself into the better, if not the best insurance organization in the country.

"We already have about 200 licensed associates and 17 branches nationwide. We are ready to invest in more branches and more associates, as long as these will add value to our company. We want everything at manageable levels so that customer service will always be of the highest quality," said Tordesillas.

And that's the way AsianLife customers personally experience the services of the better life insurance organization.

Financial Security for Education Sector

Together...as friends...as family

This is the new positioning taken by AsianLife Financial Assurance Corporation as it re-launches its life insurance business to capture, a most important segment of the Philippine population: our beloved teachers.

Manuel N. Tordesillas, AsianLife President, said the decision to tap the teachers market dates back to the company's days as All AsiaLife when it carved quite a respectable niche selling insurance to teachers through salary deduction.

"We want to regain that strength and provide teachers with just the right kind of insurance they need. Teachers need affordable policies that will protect them and ensure their and their family's well-being and quality of life," Tordesillas said.

With the insurance industry poised for further growth, AsianLife is deliberately choosing markets in which it can have a competitive advantage. Hence, it is entering markets it knows well.

Chief Operating Officer Enrique R. Alberto believes developing the teacher market, as well as the individual market for life insurance, is just the right path for AsianLife.

As of end-2002, AsianLife's assets stood at a PhP497.9 million. Policies in force numbered over 27,000 with a face amount of PhP4.3 billion.

Alberto added that the core values practiced at AsianLife makes the difference in the way it does business. "The present management has focus, discipline and pride. And we are instilling this at every level in the organization," he said.

Tordesillas said AsianLife associates know how to treat customers the way they treat their own friends and their own families.

"This kind of ethic has earned us the trust and confidence of our customers all these years," he said.

Through innovative product offerings, superior customer care and responsive management, AsianLife looks forward to a new phase of growth.

"We know we can make a difference in the lives of our customers, especially the teachers who have previously transacted with us. We are ready to serve them in ever new ways and with sustained energy and vigor," concluded Alberto.

Renewing Customer Commitment at Powwow

Financial consultants of AsianLife Financial Assurance Corporation recently renewed their commitment to excellent customer care at a powwow organized for the company's nationwide sales network. Manuel N. Tordesillas, AsianLife President, told sales executives they should continue to be "a true partner, friend and family member" to each customer.

"Be someone they can count on in their time of need. Empathize with customers and stay true to their needs under all circumstances, no matter what happens" he stressed.

Sales Heads all over the country cheered as the AsianLife board members also committed to constantly explore new and better ways of serving the life and insurance requirements of AsianLife customers.

"AsianLife is equipped to face the challenges of the future. We are in constant pursuit of high quality standards not only in our products and services, but also in our human resources," said Tordesillas.

Maintaining excellent customer care is among the high-priority goals of AsianLife. It is expected to differentiate the company from other—even bigger—players in the industry in the coming years.

ADVT.

Boston priest at center of sex abuse scandal killed in prison

BOSTON—Former priest John Geoghan, the convicted child molester whose prosecution sparked the sex abuse scandal that shook the Roman Catholic Church, died after being attacked in prison.

Preliminary indications are that Geoghan, 68, was strangled, Worcester District Attorney John J. Conte said. An autopsy will be conducted Monday.

Conte said fellow inmate Joseph L. Druce, 37, attacked Geoghan shortly before noon Saturday. Geoghan died at 1:17 p.m., shortly after he was taken to the hospital, Conte said.

Druce, who received a life sentence in 1989 for murder, armed robbery and other counts, was placed in isolation and will face murder charges in Geoghan's death, Conte said. In 2001, Druce was charged with mailing a threatening letter containing white powder and indicating it was contaminated with anthrax.

The attack took place at Souza-Baranowski Correction Center, about 30 km northwest of Boston, Department of Correction spokesperson Kelly Nantel said. Geoghan was being held in protective custody to shield him from the general prison population, but he had some contact with other inmates in protective custody.

In civil lawsuits, more than 130 people have claimed Geoghan sexually abused them as children during his three decades as a priest at Boston-area parishes. He was convicted last year of indecent assault and battery for fondling a 10-year-old boy at a swimming pool.

Mitchell Garabedian, an attorney for many Geoghan victims, said he was "surprised and shocked" by Geoghan's death.

"Many of my clients would have rather seen Father Geoghan serve out his time in jail and endure the rigors of further criminal trials, so that his pedophile acts could have been exposed further," he said.

Geoghan often targeted boys from broken homes, ingratiating himself during frequent visits or fun outings. One victim said Geoghan molested him as the two were driving home from getting an ice cream cone. Others said Geoghan molested them after visiting their rooms at bedtime to tuck them in, sometimes while whispering prayers.

The church sex abuse scandal, which has had repercussions worldwide, broke in early 2002 with revelations that the Boston Archdiocese had shuttled Geoghan from parish to parish despite warnings about his behavior. *AP*

US recruiting Saddam's spies—Washington Post

WASHINGTON—US-led occupation authorities in Iraq have begun a covert campaign to recruit and train Iraqi spies to help identify resistance to American forces, the Washington Post said on Sunday.

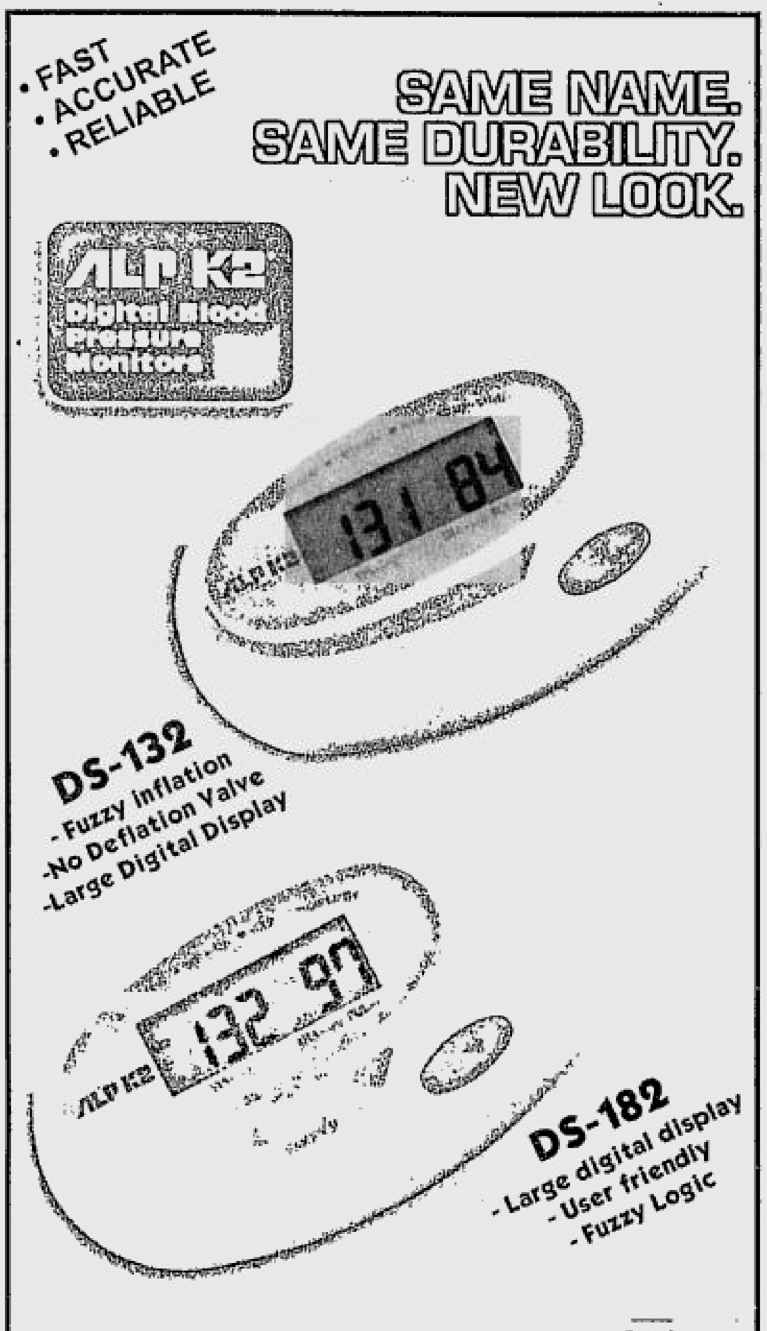
Citing unnamed US and Iraqi officials, the newspaper said the move to recruit agents of ousted President Saddam Hussein underscores a growing recognition among US officials that American forces alone cannot prevent attacks like the bombing of UN headquarters in Baghdad on Tuesday.

One senior US official said authorities have stepped up recruitment over the past two weeks.

While US officials acknowledged the sensitivity of cooperating with a force that embodied the ruthlessness of Hussein's rule, the officials said an urgent need for better intelligence had forced unusual compromises.

The report said officials were reluctant to disclose how many former agents have been recruited.

The emphasis in recruitment appeared to be on the intelligence service known as the Mukhabarat but that was not the only source, the Post said. Within that service officials have tried to recruit agents once assigned to Syria and Iran. *Reuters*



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Plane hijack plot in UK uncovered

LONDON—The FBI has uncovered intelligence that the al-Qaida terrorist network is plotting to hijack an aircraft in Britain over the next two months and fly it into an important building, a London-based newspaper said Sunday.

British Airways and other leading airlines have been put on alert after the warning was passed to Britain's security services, according to the report in The Sunday Telegraph.

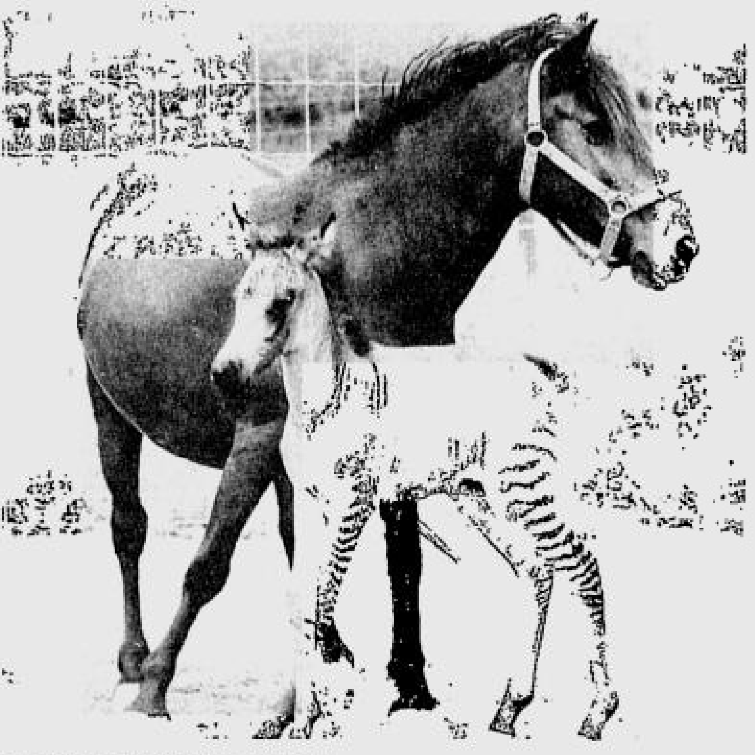
The report said that the most likely targets for the hijackers were aircraft taking off from London's Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

The FBI and the US department for homeland security circulated a warning to British and US airlines on July 30, saying that terrorists working in teams of five were likely to try to hijack aircraft using "common items carried by travelers," such as cameras, to disguise weapons, the newspaper said.

"Recent reporting on al-Qaida from intelligence sources indicated that terrorists might try to modify electronic items for use as weapons in order to circumvent improved security screening," the warning said, according to The Sunday Telegraph.

US officials said the intelligence was collected during a raid on an overseas al-Qaida residence in recent months, according to the same source.

An FBI spokesperson, quoted by the newspaper, said that information about possible attacks had also identified Italy, Australia and the United States as ground targets. *AFP*



A COLT CALLED ZORSE
The colt zorse N'Soko, a hybrid born of a zebra and a mare, stands with his mother, Victoria, in the private animal park of a farm in Cuchery. N'Soko is the brother of Kruger, the first zorse born in Europe 13 months ago. AFP

Ex-Russian tycoon nabbed in Greece

ATHENS—Former Russian media tycoon Vladimir Gusinsky, wanted by Moscow for alleged multimillion-dollar fraud, has been arrested at Athens airport on an international arrest warrant, police said Saturday.

Gusinsky, 50, is the former owner of the popular NTV television network, renowned for running stories highly critical of President Vladimir Putin's policies, especially his drive to suppress rebels in the breakaway republic of Chechnya.

Gusinsky, who possesses dual Russian and Israeli nationality, arrived in Athens on a flight from Tel Aviv Thursday and was arrested on an Interpol warrant.

Police said he was wanted by Moscow for allegedly swindling the Russian state out of $250 million. He is also accused of fraudulent privatization and money laundering. *AFP*

Sobig virus creator seen trying again

SAN FRANCISCO—The culprit behind the fast-spreading Sobig.F virus is expected to try again in coming weeks to create a vast network of zombie computers to carry out Internet attacks, security experts warned on Saturday.

"He wants to build up a (robot) net by creating zombie machines he can control," said Vincent Weafer, senior director of Symantec Corp.'s Security Response center.

An automated attack that had been set for Friday at noon California time was thwarted by government and security industry experts before it could take control of some 100,000 infected computers and possibly cripple the Internet.

Sobig.F was released last Monday on a sex-oriented Internet discussion group, infecting computers when users clicked on what appeared to be nude pictures, experts from several security companies who had seen the site said.

Prior versions of Sobig.F—the F is the sixth variation of the Sobig virus that first began appearing in January—appeared to test different means of self-replication, with each of the six versions becoming more sophisticated, Weafer said.

"There has been a sequence of different worms to create a greater goal—dynamic (robots) that can update themselves," Weafer said.

By the weekend, the infection rate of Sobig.F, which security firms call one of the fastest growing e-mail viruses ever, appeared to slow. Symantec said it was receiving 25 percent fewer copies of the virus per day on Saturday than a day or two earlier.

Infected computers now total to 145,264 worldwide, according to rival security software vendor Trend Micro's global virus map. The majority of the potential zombie machines were in North America, with 87,347, another 52,841 in Europe and 5,842 in Asia and lesser numbers on other continents. *Reuters*

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Bishop declares 16 towns 'jueteng'-free

DAGUPAN CITY—Jueteng has stopped in 16 Pangasinan towns covered by the archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan, according to Archbishop Oscar Cruz.

But what was stopped was the "organized" form of jueteng, Cruz explained. The "guerrilla type" continues.

"Organized jueteng" means there is a syndicate managing the games while "guerrilla type" refers to small operations maintained by local financiers, Cruz said.

In a circular, Cruz said he was happy to "announce that the shameful, the corrupt and corrupting vice of jueteng has stopped in the archdiocese and that it comes out only in the shameless form of guerrilla type done by incorrigible *cobradores* (bet collectors)."

The bishop thanked the provincial police, led by Senior Supt. Mario Sandiego, for helping him in his crusade.

Cruz called on the people to be vigilant to prevent the return of the organized illegal numbers game in central Pangasinan.

"Be watchful. When organized jueteng returns to the community you live, write down the names of juetengeros involved and the address where the (draw) is regularly made," he said.

He urged the people to send the names and addresses of those involved in jueteng operations to P.O. Box 88, Dagupan City.

Cruz also urged them not to listen to what jueteng operators tell them to do.

"Should we dare exchange Christ for (these) evil people with their sinful works and vicious plans?" he asked.

In Pampanga, Rep. Zenaida Cruz-Ducut confirmed her gubernatorial plan but dispelled reports she was getting financial backing from suspected jueteng lord Bong Pineda in next year's elections.

Ducut merely referred to Pineda, a resident of Lubao town, as a "constituent." Pineda was not listed in the reports of Camp Olivas on jueteng operators in Central Luzon a year after his alleged patron, President Joseph Estrada, was ousted from office in January 2001.

Police sources said Pineda had "lied low" since President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office.

Ms Macapagal had denied that Pineda had contributed to her senatorial campaign.

Ducut said Pineda's wife, Provincial Board Member Lilia Pineda, and his son, Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda, were her "supporters in the second district."

Ducut, who is provincial chair of the Nationalist People's Coalition, said she was expecting the party's central committee, led by businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., to choose her over another NPC member, Rep. Juan Pablo Bondoc.

Even then, she said she would run "with or without the party's approval."

Her running mate is former Vice Gov. Clayton Olalia, who had left the ruling party Lakas-NUCD.

With Ducut confirming her May 2004 plans, the gubernatorial race in Pampanga would become a four-cornered fight among three congressmen, including Rep. Oscar Rodriguez and Mark Lapid, Association of Barangay Captains president and son of incumbent Gov. Manuel Lapid. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Army to sue pols paying rebel fees

LEGAZPI CITY—Army officials warned they will sue local officials and politicians who continuously coddle the New People's Army.

Army Col. Joel Cabides, deputy commander of the 9th Infantry Brigade based in Camarines Sur said the Army would be forced to submit to the court the names of politicians who would pay the permit-to-campaign (PTC) fees.

Col. Pedro Tabangay of the 22nd Infantry Battalion told the INQUIRER that they were gathering data on local officials who support the rebels. "If we cannot disqualify them from their candidacy, we'll just compile pieces of evidence against them and later, slap them with cases." he said.

The complaints were aired by Gen. Pedrito Magsino, commander of the 901st Infantry Brigade, and his commanders during the Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) meeting last week. He urged the council to work for the suspension and disqualification of politicians paying PTC fees.

RPOC chief Al Francis Bichara, however, said the politicians cannot be blamed for paying the rebels. "What protection can the military give to those politicians during the campaign period?" he asked. He said candidates have people at the barangay level, who are the ones hassled by the rebels.

He advised the military to send its proposal to Congress. The council created a 'study group' composed of military and police officials to identify the 'rebel supporters.' *Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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GMA tells PMA cadets to re-examine oath

By Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—It was not an "arrogant President" who dined with 988 Philippine Military Academy cadets as Typhoon Nina unleashed strong rains on Friday night.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, in a dark blue suit, stood tall among the cadets when she admitted that she could be "overbearing."

And in a twist that surprised the cadets into attention, Ms Macapagal acknowledged that soldiers who staged the Oakwood mutiny on July 27 could also be "courageous" for speaking their minds.

During his testimony before the Feliciano Commission looking into the roots of the mutiny, an angry Navy Lt. (s.g.) Antonio Trillanes IV, spokesperson of the Magdalo group of soldiers, described Ms Macapagal as "arrogant" who ignored his revelations when they met in Malacañang two weeks before the mutiny.

But the President's apologies were not all contrite. She managed to offer the academy a sarcastic compliment when she confirmed PMA's "sympathy" for the mutineers.

"I know that many of the (suspects in the) Oakwood incident had the sympathy of many of you. I understand your position. It takes great courage for any young officer to stand up and speak aloud about his frustrations—maybe even greater courage that is needed to face the enemy in combat," the President said.

Heart-to-heart talk

"I came here to have a heart-to-heart talk. I would appreciate it very much if you would dispel any pre-conceived thoughts that I am an arrogant President. I know that I can be contentious or perhaps even overbearing sometimes. But we all have our strengths and weaknesses," Ms Macapagal told the cadets.

"But I do not harbor notions (of) superiority over my fellow human beings, including subordinates in the civilian and military establishment."

Ms Macapagal received a standing ovation from the cadets when she said that her government would not push for the abolition of the 104-year-old PMA despite proposals from legislators and critics.

Ms Macapagal then told the cadets that her government had addressed the Magdalo group's complaints about procurement irregularities in the Navy and the Army, which had deprived troops of equipment, bullets and gasoline.

The President said she had banned all military infrastructure projects, except those required for rehabilitating war-torn villages, and for raising new hospitals or detention cells.

She also ordered a mandatory and institutionalized audit of "all contingency funds," including government money used for espionage and intelligence work.

Given these responses, Ms Macapagal reminded the cadets that she did not visit PMA "to demonize the officers and soldiers who went to Oakwood."

"But we need to ask ourselves, 'Is this the way we really want to change our nation?' Are we aware of the consequences of doing away with the Constitution and establishing a revolutionary regime but by force rather than laws?" she asked the cadets.

Re-examine oath

She continued: "Whatever you think about the rightness of their cause, I ask you once more to re-examine your oaths, to dig deep in your hearts and recall the values and principles our forebears died for."

Ms Macapagal advised PMA critics that instead of accusing the academy of failing the alumni members who joined the mutiny, they should realize that it was the mutineers who failed the ideals of PMA.

"I felt glad when she said that she still believes in the PMA. The cadet corps is enlightened by her speech," said Cadet First Class Gerald Escalante, the class baron.

Escalante gave the President the corps' oath of allegiance to her administration after she pardoned 655 cadets for minor infractions obtained this school period.

"We are solidly behind you . . . We are here to be advocates for good governance," he said.

Through that night's dinner of stewed beef and pasta, and while some 20 fourth class cadets serenaded her, Ms Macapagal appeared distant.

Maj. Gen. Edilberto Adan, PMA superintendent, later explained that the President never asked for a loyalty check from PMA. He said Ms Macapagal's reference to the Magdalo "sympathizers" in the PMA should be interpreted to mean the active officers' frustration over graft in the military.

Adan said Ms Macapagal was interested in the PMA's new curriculum and inter-personal dynamics when she sat for 20 minutes with PMA's professors and senior cadets.

He said Ms Macapagal was "not at all critical" of the new PMA curriculum that is now being applied to third and fourth class cadets.

The President asked Adan to begin a series of dialogues between cadets and university students to clarify concepts on civilian social structures.

SOROPTOMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE PHILIPPINES REGION

Celebrates: Soroptimist WEEK

(Presidential Proclamation 1072 by Former Pres. Fidel V. Ramos)

AUGUST 25-30, 2003

THEME: "SOROPTOMIST FOR GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST POVERTY"

Soroptimist International, "Making a Difference for Women since 1921", is a worldwide organization for women in management and professions working through service projects to advance Human Rights and Status of Women. There are about 100,000 members in 119 countries all over the world.

GOALS

- To maintain high ethical standards in business and professional life
- To strive for human rights for all people and, in particular, to advance the status of women
- To develop a spirit of friendship and unity among Soroptimists of all countries.
- To develop interest in community, local and international affairs
- To contribute to international understanding and universal affairs.
- To develop the highest concept of patriotism.

These goals at the community, national and international levels are accomplished through six programs of service:

- Economic and Social Development
- Education
- Environment
- Health
- Human Rights / Status of Women
- International Goodwill and Understanding

Soroptimist International of the Philippines Region (SIPR) was founded in 1966 by Ms. Mariquita Castelo. Its identifying projects in the Region are: Adopt –a- Barangay and the PNP Women's and Children's Desk.

BIENNIUM THRUSTS 2002-2004

- Alleviation of Poverty especially for Women
- Values Education for Women and Girls
- Membership Development

SIPR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BIENNIUM 2002-2004

VISION - with the Region's Biennium Thrusts, that all clubs will participate by pooling together all financial and human resources to be able to:

- assess poverty and gender implications of the current socio-economic policies including structural adjustment programs, those that have direct impact on poor women
- provide women equal access to land and other productive resources and other credit and extension services
- increase training in education, health, investments, particularly in areas where poor people live or work
- introduce women-friendly credit system
- provide self-help organizations and assist female heads of families

MISSION

- To help eradicate the root causes of poverty in order to elevate the status of women above the poverty line
- To advance the status of women through values education
- To develop and enhance members and nurture future leaders to sustain the organization

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Governor

DULCE I. GOZON
Governor-elect

TERESITA B. CHOA
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CELESTINA C. NG
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Asst. Secretary

GRACE O. PANGILINAN
Asst. Treasurer

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DD ADELENE G. GATMAITAN
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Bulacan South

DD MANOLITA MENDOZA
Metro Manila South

DD RUTH FLORES
Metro Manila Southeast

DD VERONICA TEANO
Metro Manila Northwest

DD NORMA LOZANO
Metro Manila Northeast

DD ROLINDA R. MARASIGAN
Southern Luzon

DD GUDELIA COO
Western Visayas

DD FE TERESA BEANIZA
Eastern Mindanao

DD ESTRELITA SALANGSANG
Southern Mindanao

DD MYRA PAZ V. ABUBAKAR
Western Mindanao

SOROPTIMIST WEEK ACTIVITIES

All the 83 clubs nationwide will celebrate "SOROPTIMIST WEEK" with different activities dictated by the needs of the communities where Soroptimists live. Activities range from opening of shelters for battered and abused women and children to day care centers with feeding programs for malnourished children. Culminating activity, however, will be a Mass in honor of SIPR Founder Mariquit Castelo at the Ermita church preceded by an Alay Lakad by the Soroptimists.

Comelec suspends top Misamis poll official

By Ryan D. Rosauro
PDI Mindanao Bureau

OROQUIETA CITY—In a decision that serves as a stern warning against election irregularities, the Commission on Elections suspended a top provincial election official and nullified the proclamation of mayor Nancy Bandala.

Suspended until after the May 10, 2004 elections is lawyer Francisco Pobe, Misamis Occidental's election supervisor.

The Comelec also directed its law department to file charges against Filoteo Alngohuro, chair of the city board of canvassers along with precinct-level poll officials for violation of election rules.

The commission found a "strong *prima facie* case" against these individuals.

In an *en banc* resolution promulgated Aug. 14, the Comelec affirmed the contention of petitioner, mayoral candidate Alejandro Berenguel, that there is basis to withhold the proclamation of Bandala last June 30, 2001, and hence, treat his protest as a pre-proclamation one.

In declaring Bandala's proclamation as "null and void *ab initio*," the Comelec cited that when the announcement of her victory was made on June 30, 2001, Berenguel's petition was still pending resolution.

The proclamation then was without authority from the Commission, which listed Berenguel's petition as among the pending cases in a July 29, 2001 resolution.

The controversy stemmed from Berenguel's motion to exclude from the canvass 80 election returns because of some defects.

His camp noted that the envelopes containing 71 of the 80 returns lack inner paper seals, seven returns did not indicate the party affiliation of the watcher-signatories, and two were found to have certain irregularities like the missing page containing the list of local candidates.

Berenguel has argued that because of this fact, the balloting results in the questioned precincts were clouded with doubt, and hence should not have been included in the canvass.

His camp also argued that because of the sheer size of the votes involved, the results affected the turnout of the election. The 71 questioned precincts contained over 10,000 votes.

During the May 14, 2001 polls, Bandala defeated Berenguel by over a thousand votes out of the more than 20,000 votes cast.

But the Board of Canvassers (BOC) dismissed Berenguel's protest. On May 23, 2001, Berenguel appealed the BOC ruling to the Commission.

The Aug.14 ruling held that the paper seal issue raised by Berenguel merits consideration and hence, is enough reason to stop Bandala's proclamation.

The BOC has previously held that the lack of inner paper seals of the envelopes containing the 71 election returns were merely formal defects. But the Comelec brushed this aside saying the consistency of said defect in the 71 contested election returns and 30 uncontested ones "cannot be passed along as ordinary and mere formal defects."

When asked why the returns were not secured with paper seals, over 200 precinct-level officials serving as members of the board of election inspectors (BEIs) said they could no longer remember whether they have placed or have forgotten to place the inner paper seal.

Only four of the poll officials admitted "with certainty" that they pasted the inner paper seal.

With the nullification of Bandala's proclamation, the vice mayor takes over until the duly elected mayor shall have been proclaimed after a recount of the votes.

The Comelec has formed a new board of canvassers composed of lawyers based in the Commission's central office, for the recount which was slated for tomorrow.

The INQUIRER also learned that Bandala's camp is filing a motion to stop the canvass.

Pobe's suspension took effect from the promulgation date of the resolution. His salary is forfeited during the suspension period.

The mystery behind the missing paper seals cost Pobe the suspension. The Comelec found that he "played an important role in concealing the mystery of the missing inner paper seal of the subject ERs (election returns)" during the investigation of the matter early this year.

Pobe justified the failure to seal the election returns as "human frailty," ascribing it to "overfatigue."

The Comelec also observed the "resentment and resistance" displayed by both Pobe and Bandala's counsel to the supervision by a Commission officer from Manila who was tasked to oversee the investigation.

Apart from violation of election rules, the teachers who served as BEIs, except for four, would also be facing administrative charges before the Department of Education, as per Comelec recommendation.

The ruling was penned by Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco and concurred by three other commissioners, while another two raised dissenting opinions. Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos did not take part in the deliberations.

Endangered turtle eggs hatch in Davao

DAVAO CITY—Turtles are tempting for those who want pets but fisheries, environment and local government officials were one in saying that releasing the animal back to the wild was more fun and would bring lasting fulfillment.

And so on Friday morning, the little shelled creatures, numbering about 55, raced with each other at Punta Dumalag in Matina District to reach the sea, their real home.

A few weeks ago, concerned residents brought their discovery of clusters of Hawksbill turtle eggs in the populated fishing village to the attention of officials.

The nests were inside a lot owned by the Aboitiz family and one of these contained 137 eggs.

After taking the necessary precautions, including educating the locals on how not to disturb the nests, officials and residents then waited for the eggs to hatch.

Councilor Leonardo Avila said that early morning on Friday, some of the 137 eggs began to crack and the little turtles emerged out of their shells.

A few hours later, all but 72 eggs were hatched.

"This is one of the best news for Kadayawan and the first documented hatching of Hawksbill turtle eggs in the city," Avila said.

Kadayawan is the city's thanksgiving festival, which ended yesterday.

The hatchlings measured from 36 to 44 centimeters.

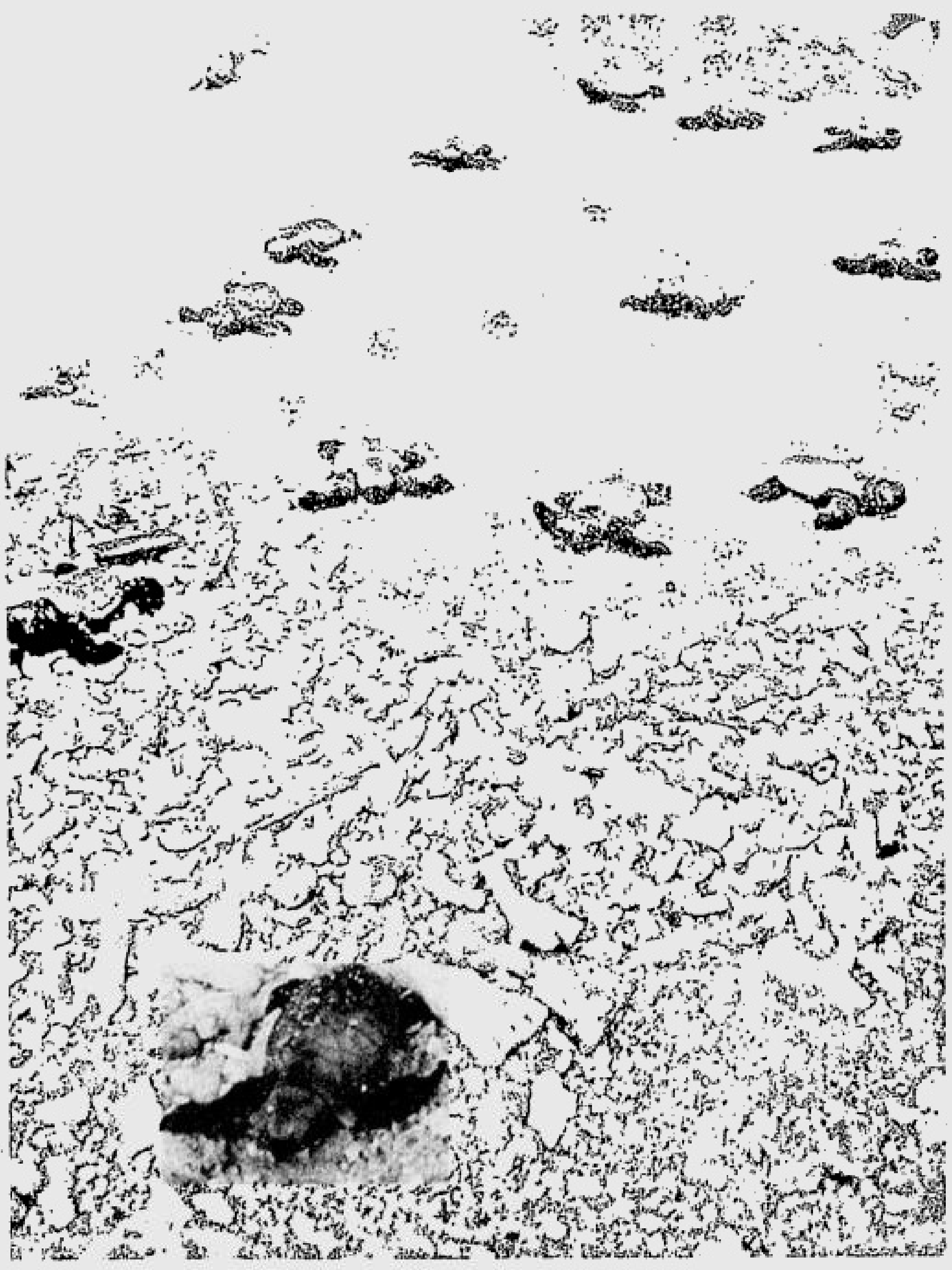
The Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) has been considered an endangered animal and poaching of its eggs and hunting of adult turtles were constantly threatening its existence.

In some countries, including the Philippines, turtle eggs are a delicacy and its meat is an ingredient in some exotic Chinese cuisines.

Hawksbill turtles are usually found in the tropical and subtropical waters of the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Indian oceans.

The discovery of turtle eggs in populated areas like Punta Dumalag, a thriving fishing community of about 100,000 people, still puzzles scientists. The animal could be easily agitated and would permanently abandon its nesting ground at the slightest disturbance.

"It is an unlikely place to attract sea turtles as a nesting area. The Punta Dumalag nesting ground was the first to be found within a highly urbanized city such as Davao," Avila said. *PDI Mindanao Bureau*



NEWLY hatched Hawksbill turtles rush to the sea in Punta Dumalag, Matina, Davao City.
BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Antique icon stolen in Cebu

CEBU CITY—Unidentified suspects on Thursday stole an antique religious icon from a church in Barili town, about 62 kilometers southwest of this city.

Msgr. Elias Matarlo, parish priest of Sta. Ana Parish, reported to the police about the missing one-foot image of the Child Jesus being carried by the image of San Antonio de Padua.

Insp. Ernesto Yungco, Barili police chief, said Matarlo told him that the image was still inside the glass case when he officiated the Mass at 5:30 a.m. Thursday.

But at about 9 a.m., the priest noticed that the image was gone.

Police investigation shows that the thieves forcibly opened the glass case and stole the image. Yungco said the thieves might have pretended to be among the churchgoers so they would not be detected.

It was learned that the image of the Child Jesus was made of wood and was more than 30 years of age. *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Cebu airport manager sued for staying in post

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—After failing to get the rejuvenation project of the airport runway, the country manager of Echelon Industries Inc. is fighting back.

Crisologo Saavedra sued Angelo Verdan, general manager of Mactan Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA), for prolonging performance of duties and powers in violation of Revised Penal Code.

Saavedra claimed that Verdan remained in office even if the Civil Service Commission had disqualified him last July 7.

Verdan, however, said he stayed on instructions of the MCIAA board.

"It is the board of directors who appointed me. They have the appointing authority and they have instructed me to stay, so if there is any course of action, it should be directed to the board of directors," he said.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza appointed Verdan as MCIAA general manager last October.

The CSC in Central Visayas, however, disqualified Verdan because he lacked eligibility and a qualified applicant was available for the position.

Mendoza appealed the decision to the CSC-Manila, which later affirmed the decision of its regional office.

In a complaint before the Lapulapu City Prosecutor's Office, Saavedra said the CSC already denied with finality the motion for reconsideration filed by Mendoza on July 7.

He said Verdan received a copy of the order on July 22 and was given 15 days to vacate the office. The 15-day period had lapsed, he added, yet Verdan remained in the post.

Saavedra pointed out that Verdan issued three memoranda on July 30, Aug. 1 and Aug. 7, which he said were proofs that Verdan continued to discharge his functions.

He asked the prosecutor's office to charge Verdan before the court.

The MCIAA earlier refused to award Echelon Industries, a US-based firm, the project to rehabilitate the airport runway even if the firm won the bidding last March 2002.

The MCIAA instead entered into an agreement with the Air Transportation Office for the latter to undertake the P44-million project.

Suspension of Ecija mayor stopped anew

CABANATUAN CITY—The 60-day preventive suspension of Mayor Elizabeth Vargas of Aliaga, Nueva Ecija, was interrupted anew as the Court of Appeals ordered her temporary reinstatement pending the hearing of the administrative case filed against her by her vice mayor and municipal councilors.

Nueva Ecija Gov. Tomas Joson III suspended Vargas for 60 days starting April on recommendation of the provincial board, which is looking into the administrative case filed against her for dishonesty, misconduct in office and abuse of authority. Barely 20 days into her suspension, Vargas was ordered by Malacañang to reassume office.

But Joson sought reconsideration of the Malacañang order and won. Vargas stepped down the second time to continue serving her suspension. She, however, filed a petition before the Court of Appeals questioning the resolution of the executive secretary that reinstated the preventive suspension order of Joson and her administrative case.

In her petition, Vargas said she was suspended by Joson without the provincial board giving due course to her motion that her administrative case was premature.

She said she was still questioning before the regional trail court the validity of the documents used by officials who filed the administrative case against her.

Vargas said the vice mayor and councilors had claimed that the documents on the appropriations ordinance she submitted to the provincial budget office were falsified, but that the documents were approved by these officials.

The Court of Appeals is determining if the civil case filed by Vargas before the regional trial court for annulment of falsified minutes of session of the Aliaga municipal board and the appropriation ordinance could be considered a prejudicial question. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

ROUNDUP

7 hurt in mishap

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Two Army officials, four enlisted men and a civilian were seriously injured when the military truck they were riding figured in a road mishap in Malungon, Sarangani on Friday. Rushed to a private hospital were Army Maj. Rodrigo Limos, 2Lt. Raul Verceles, Msgt. Ariston Lasaga, Pfc. Mario Ferrer, Pfc. George Villa, Msgt. Catalino Matias and his wife Fe. The soldiers belong to the Army's 2nd Light Armor Battalion. The military truck overturned while trying to overtake another vehicle in Sitio Cebuano, Barangay Poblacion in Malungon. The driver tried to gain control of the truck when it swerved, nearly hitting the car from the opposite lane. It smashed into a big tree by the roadside.
Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Church worker cleared

PIDIGAN, Abra—A judge has cleared a church worker of involvement in the killing of former rebel priest Conrado Balweg in 1999. Citing lack of evidence, acting Judge Loreto Seares of the municipal trial court in Pidigan dismissed the cases against Lorna Baba, who was accused by the military of using a fictitious name and illegal possession of firearms. In a statement, the Cordillera Human Rights Organization hailed the court ruling, saying this "gave Baba the long delayed justice sought by her, her family and friends." *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

3 top cops removed

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan—Three police officials in Pangasinan were relieved from their posts two days after they topped the performance audit of the anti-drug campaign. They were Supt. Raul Petrasanta, chief of the Urdaneta City police; Supt. Jessie Cardona, Alaminos City police chief; and Senior Insp. Candito Quijardo, chief of the Calasiao police. The order, dated Aug. 18, did not cite any reason and came on the same day five police chiefs who flunked in the audit were ordered relieved from their posts. The order was signed by Senior Supt. Romeo Espiritu, chief of the Ilocos police's human resources development office, on behalf of Senior Supt. Claudio Cabreros, Ilocos police director. Also relieved for failing in the anti-drug campaign were Senior Insp. Jeremias Rasing of Agno town; Supt. Zosimo Fernandez of Bani town; Senior Insp. Tomas Obillo of Dasol town; Chief Insp. Reynaldo Tamondong of Bautista town; and Senior Insp. Reynaldo Tabilin of San Fabian town. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Truck hijacking

DINALUPIHAN, Bataan—Eight armed men hijacked a 10-wheel truck loaded with some 1,700 cases of Ginebra San Miguel gin on Tuesday night. Senior Supt. Sahiron Salim, Bataan police director, said the truck's driver and two helpers were delivering the shipment worth P74,000 to Olongapo City when they were blocked by the armed men along the highway in this town. Driver Danilo Musni told police that one of the suspects pointed his .45 cal. pistol at him and ordered him and his helpers to board the suspects' Mitsubishi L-300 van. Musni said the suspects tied them and later left them in Barangay Prado Siongco in Lubao, Pampanga.
Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Village chief hunted

CAMP DANGWA, La Trinidad, Benguet—Police are hunting a village chief in Abra for killing a man after an argument on Monday. Reports said Amante Bigornia, chief of Barangay Tagudtod in Lagangilang, Abra, was suspected of shooting and killing Moises Berbosa during a drinking session in their village. At the height of the argument, Bigornia pulled out his gun and shot Berbosa, who died before reaching the hospital. Also in Lagangilang, police said Billy Tejero, an official in Barangay Nagsayngan, shot his neighbor Alvin Tano on Monday. Tano survived but was reported to be in a critical condition. Tejero fled and is now being hunted by police.
Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Alumni reunion

GRADUATES of the Holy Infant College (HIC) Tacloban City will have a Grand Alumni Homecoming on Friday, Sept. 26, to be hosted by HIC High School Batch 1978. The batch will be celebrating their Silver Anniversary this year. For details, call Felicity Velarde-Abellanosa at (053) 325-2917 or 09179414776; Elizabeth Lagunzad-Arinto 09185655931; Merle Conde-Gabino (053)322-2292; and Eudoxio Ocampos (053)325-5906 or 0918129504.

Treasurer sacked

DUMAGUETE CITY—The municipal treasurer of Siaton was temporarily relieved pending investigation on charges of graft and corruption and falsification of public documents. Ordered relieved by the Bureau of Local Government Office executive director Presentacion Montesa was Evelyn Acas who was accused of tampering vouchers in the purchase of materials, among others. Acas would be detailed at the office of the provincial treasurer where she would continue to receive her salary and other benefits *Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Jail for driver

BACOLOD CITY—A jeepney driver was meted a 40-year jail term after he was found guilty of raping 18-year-old girl whom he had been courting. Judge Edgar Garvilles of the Regional Trial Court also ordered Roberto Ywayan, 36, to indemnify his victim P100,000. Ywayan strongly denied the charges, saying he was a victim of a frame-up Ywayan, who she said was a persistent suitor, abducted her and her two brothers last June 3. She said she agreed to ride on his jeepney provided her brothers went with them. But Ywayan brought them to his house. He locked her brothers in one room and her, in another room where she was repeatedly raped. The brothers escaped on June 5 and reported the incident to their mother. The police, accompanied by their mother, rescued the girl later that day
Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Group says 3 media persons slain a year

LUCENA CITY—The National Union of Journalists in the Philippines has strongly condemned the rising number of journalists being murdered and other forms of violence and harassment against them.

"The average figure for the number of Philippine journalists killed in the line of duty is three. This year, we have already surpassed the 'quota'," the NUJP revealed in a statement.

The media organization noted that while President Macapagal-Arroyo was busy presenting roses to irate reporters, her aides were stumbling all over each other to reassure Philippine media that it was not under siege.

The NUJP, however, pointed out that unidentified gunmen killed on Aug. 19 hard-hitting Laguna radio broadcaster and columnist Noel Villarante.

It said Villarante was known for his exposés of local anomalies and was particularly tough on lawmen and politicians suspected of coddling drug lords.

The assassination of the broadcaster, according to the NUJP, followed the fatal ambush of Lucena broadcaster Apolinario Pobeda on May 17, the arrests of several Cagayan de Oro City journalists for libel, and the more recent arrest of Tribune editor in chief Ninez Cacho-Olivarez, who faces criminal charges filed by the President's personal lawyer.

The NUJP disclosed that several days after Villarante's death, Manila Bulletin and Tempo news correspondent Jeama Sabate also received a death threat by fax, apparently in response to several critical articles involving powerful lawyers.

The fragile relationship between the media and the government hogged the headlines again after GMA 7's Tina Panganiban-Perez was berated by the President for "abetting rebellion" when she interviewed suspected coup mastermind Sen. Gregorio Honasan two weeks after the failed putsch in Makati City.

"Government apologists have pooh-poohed media protests, intimating that scared souls should get out of the profession. Scared is hardly the right adjective for Filipino journalists, who have had to work all these years under difficult and dangerous conditions," the NUJP asserted.

Aside from Villarante and Pobeda, two journalists have been killed this year, according to the NUJP files.

They were broadcaster John Villanueva of dzGB in Legazpi City (April 28) and reporter-columnist Bonifacio Gregorio of the Tarlac-based Dyaryo Banat (July 8).

The NUJP said that since the "return of democracy" in 1986, 41 Filipino journalists have been killed and several others have been victims of ambush or mauling, torture and illegal detention by agents of the government or henchmen of powerful individuals.

While the government still has to re-arrest Indonesian bomber Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi and punish those responsible for his escape from a high-security Camp Crame cell, no less than Philippine National Police Director-Gen. Hermogenes Ebdane has admitted that scant manpower and resources are being squandered on surveillance of journalists.

However, Ebdane recanted his admission the next day after Malacañang had been subjected to intense criticisms, particularly from among the media practitioners.

The NUJP disclosed that the pending anti-terrorism measure also targeted media by imposing stringent restrictions on coverage and access to sources and state information, and making journalists vulnerable to communications surveillance.

It called on media colleagues to persevere in the fight for the independence of journalists. It also urged all journalists to combat all efforts to silence the media.

"While the NUJP upholds and advances the cause of professionalism and ethics in media, it reminds colleagues to set aside political, personal and professional differences where press freedom is at stake," it added. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Countdown for Justice

WAPILE

IT is exactly 469 days today since Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Wapile, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.

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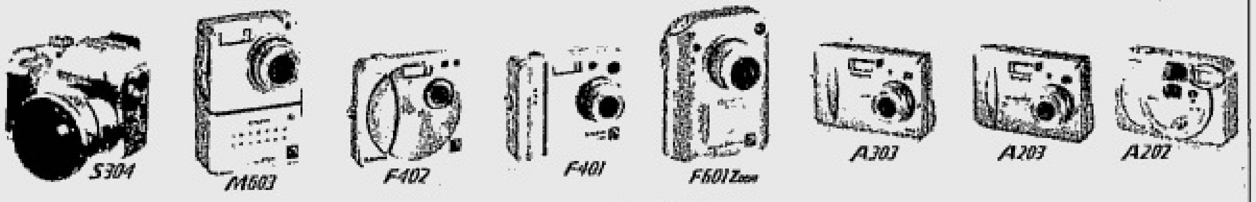

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3. Contest Requirements:
   a. Typewritten testimonial on 1-2 pages bond size, A4, double-spaced with your NAME, ADDRESS, CONTACT NUMBERS and SIGNATURE. Entries may be written in English or Filipino.
   b. An 8R color or black & white photo print out must be submitted with the Fuego testimonial. Note that the Isuzu Fuego must be included in the photo. Printable digital photos are allowed if entry is to be submitted via e-mail.
   c. Photocopy of owner's OR/CR, as proof of ownership.
4. Entries must be enclosed in a brown envelope with the promo name "My Fuego Story" written and sent to the CUSTOMER RELATIONS TEAM OF ISUZU PHILIPPINES CORPORATION via the following:
   a. mail to the Customer Relations Team, Isuzu Philippines Corporation, 114 Technology Ave., Laguna Technopark, Biñan, Laguna;
   b. e-mail to **my-fuego@isuzuphil.com.**
5. Only entries received on or before September 5, 2003 will be qualified.
6. Preliminary judging will be done on September 8-10, 2003 5:00PM by representatives from Isuzu Philippines Corp. where a shortlist of 25 will be determined, in the presence of a DTI representative. **The short-listed entries will each get P2,500.00 in cash.**
7. Final judging will be done on September 11 & 12, 2003 by a panel of judges from the press and advertising industry and supervised by a representative from the DTI, to award the prizes.
8. All winning entries become the exclusive property of Isuzu Philippines Corp.
9. Winners will be judged according to the following criteria:

Content (60%)
- Clarity (20%)
- Relevance (20%)
- Interest Factor (15%)
- Picture (5%)

Writing Style (40%)
- Accuracy (20%)
- Cohesion (20%)

10. A participant can win only once in the final judging. If a name wins more than once, he gets the bigger prize.
11. All prizes are TAX-PAID, no fees are required upon claim of prizes.
12. Winners will be notified via phone and registered mail. Winners will be announced in leading newspapers.
13. Winners can claim their prizes from the Customer Relations Team of Isuzu Philippines Corporation, 114 Technology Ave., Laguna Technopark, Biñan, Laguna within 60 days of receipt of notification, otherwise, prizes will be forfeited with prior approval of DTI. Bring any valid ID for identity verification when claiming your prize.
14. Employees of Isuzu Philippines Corporation, authorized dealerships of Isuzu Philippines Corporation, and Great Wall Advertising Philippines, Inc. including their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the contest.
15. Winning entries will be published in leading magazines and newspapers.
16. Promo runs from August 7, 2003- September 5, 2003.

Control Measures:
- All entries received shall be dropped in a sealed dropbox by authorized representatives of the Customer Relations Team of Isuzu Philippines Corp.
- A DTI representative will be invited to be present in the opening of the dropbox and during the preliminary and final judging of entries.
- A list of winners with their addresses and prize won shall be given to the DTI representative after the judging.

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I'm a victim of my past, says Gringo

From page A1

He said he had not seen his wife Jane since he made himself "inaccessible," and had spoken only "briefly" with his children. He said he avoided sleeping in the same place on consecutive days.

He admitted to being "highly mobile," using all means of transportation available, for his "appearances" in various forums.

But he flip-flopped on reports that the influential Iglesia ni Cristo was helping him, initially telling the reporters that he was "neither confirming nor denying" the news.

Early Sunday morning, Manny Mortero, a member of Honasan's Senate staff, sent a message saying the senator was "categorically denying" the alleged intelligence report that the INC was "coddling" him.

His lawyer, Daniel Gutierrez, also quoted the senator as saying the alleged intelligence report was an "attempt to pin down and link up individuals and institutions" to the July 27 mutiny in Makati City.

"Poor intelligence work" was Honasan's description of the claim that he had taken refuge in an INC compound in Culiat, Quezon City, Gutierrez said.

The government was "running amuck" in its bid to look for Honasan, the lawyer added.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has strongly denied the information that the government had suspected the INC of harboring Honasan. Top security officials even denied the existence of the alleged report, calling the document "spurious."

"We are not hiding Sen. Gregorio Honasan," INC spokesperson Bienvenido C. Santiago also said.

More denials

Later in the day, Honasan categorically denied that the INC was hiding him, saying those who helped him were ordinary people not affiliated with any sector or group.

Honasan told the INQUIRER that his "support group" was broad-based and included ordinary farmers.

"They help in making me inaccessible, they receive me in their homes and allow me to stay with them," he said.

He said he understood why the INC reacted the way it did. He noted that the politically influential religious sect was "sensitive" about the allegation as this would "violate its principles and apolitical stand and the issue of separation of State and Church."

Honasan emphasized that the charges against him were "purely political."

On the alleged military intelligence report, the senator said that apparently some people were trying to "force the INC into a corner"—in the same way, he said, that the government was putting "my back into (*sic*) the wall."

He said he would remain inaccessible because his confidence level in the government was "low." But he said his legal defense team was continuing to prepare his defense. He said he had asked many legal advisers, who all told him the charges against him would not stand in court.

He said the government's star witness, Major Ragil, for instance, was a member of the Presidential Security Group, and that "he will protect the President and toe the assassination line."

"I appeal for sobriety, justice and (a) level playing field, and I am asking for more time for my legal team to prepare the necessary documents to refute the charges," Honasan said.

Live interview

The senator, who masterminded the 1987 and 1989 coup attempts against the Aquino administration but received amnesty in 1995, has been charged with rebellion along with six others for the July 27 mutiny, but no warrant of arrest has been issued to date.

During the face-to-face interview on Saturday, Honasan said: "I am always on the short list of the usual suspects. I am, in a way, a victim of my past."

Today is a neither-here-nor-there situation, unlike in the 1980s when he went underground and was clearly a fugitive. Then, reporters who were invited to interview him had to be blindfolded.

This time, a group of reporters traveled at night, but with eyes wide open.

Honasan has not enjoyed this much media attention since becoming a lawmaker in 1998 until he was named the "Kuya" or elder brother of the junior military officers who occupied the Oakwood Premier luxury apartments in Makati City on July 27.

He denied he influenced the mutinous Magdalo boys. "I am being made a scapegoat, a punching bag, the guinea pig for this partisan political experiment," he said.

But former comrades have called him a coward, a "user" and an officer who abandoned his own men when push came to shove. They said he enjoyed being a fugitive because it promoted him as a "legend."

His reply: "I have never left any man dead or alive for the enemy to feast on, in the same manner that I am now feasted on by former comrades." He added: "(Being a fugitive) is most difficult for the mind, the body and the soul."

He appealed for a "stop to this trial by publicity" and gave the assurance that he would surface once the charges of rebellion were "clarified" and made bailable.

For him, he said, conviction in a "kangaroo" court, imprisonment and being "erased" from society was the "worst-case scenario."

Couldn't he escape from prison, as he did in 1987, bringing along his guards? "Not (at) my age," he said, sadly.

Counteraffidavit

"I find myself with a few more pounds, with more white hair, going through exactly the same message, the same situation as I did a few decades back," he said.

Gutierrez said Honasan's legal defense team was completing the senator's counteraffidavit to the charges filed against him. Honasan has only until Aug. 27 to file his counteraffidavit.

But Gutierrez said the team was having a difficult time because of the government's continuing release of "piece-meal" evidence against Honasan.

The latest instance, he said, was the media interview of the government's star witness, Major Ragil, and the claim of Justice Undersecretary Jose Calida that the government had 10 soldiers who would stand as witness against Honasan, he said.

"We're a little worried ... if it's timely to file a counteraffidavit as we do not know if the complaint filed with the DOJ was the entire complaint," he said in a phone interview.

Senate Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III said he had talked to Honasan recently, who asked his help for his legal defense. *With reports from Christine Avendaño and AP*

EL SHADDAI PRAYER RALLY RANDY HORMI

Bro. Mike Velarde, head of the charismatic religious group El Shaddai, together with President Macapagal and several Cabinet members, leads a prayer rally on Sunday at the Quirino Grandstand.

Big Mike gets help ...

From page A1

because it hinders people from doing their work. Let us give the President a break," Velarde said.

The charismatic leader noted that Ms Macapagal "never misses an anniversary. She's always with us." The President came at around 11:30 p.m. on Saturday.

There are speculations that Ms Macapagal would run in next year's presidential election despite her pronouncement last December that she would not seek another term and would focus on building a strong republic.

"We're open to anyone as long as they come to be with us and not to campaign . . . In fact, it's the politicians that we need to bring to God," Velarde said.

He said that at this time, no politician had approached him to seek the support of the 8 million-strong El Shaddai flock.

Velarde said the country needed to be united to protect democracy and maintain peace. "Let us not just pray. We must stay united because these are dangerous times," he said.

He appealed to the people to restore their trust in the country's Catholic Church leaders, who have been embroiled in sex scandals.

They should renew their respect for and faith in the bishops and priests because the clergy was working to address its faults, he said.

Bacani back ...

From page A1

anyone. Bacani's former secretary lodged a complaint before the Apostolic Nunciature, but the Vatican has not yet decided on the case.

Closer to God

Bacani said his two-month vacation in Kansas City had brought him closer to God and his family. He said that while he did not discover enemies during the scandal, he found true friends.

He left for the United States on June 9 at the height of the sex scandal. He said he wanted to seek treatment for his diabetes and spend time with his ailing mother.

But in his first interview since coming back, Bacani admitted that he had suffered a lot of tension since being embroiled in the scandal. But he said he was "very happy to be back" and intends to stay in the country "for the foreseeable future."

Case pending

Bacani has not yet visited his diocese, although he said he would be saying Mass in his parishes soon. He would also be "partly" staying in his Novaliches quarters.

The Vatican has appointed Bishop Antonio Tobias as apostolic administrator of Novaliches while Bacani's case is pending before the Vatican. Bacani, however, remains its titular bishop.

"I expect to be a little quieter, have more time for prayer," Bacani said, adding that he hoped to maintain his privacy during his stay.

2 social workers get heroes' burial

From page A1

Marquez took part in the distribution, while Borromeo toted a video camera, documenting the day's mission in Barangay Buliok in Pagalungan, Maguindanao. Boarding the boat that would take the group back to Bago-inged after the activity, the two were last seen seated facing each other, "playing with a black cat they picked up from somewhere," Soliman said.

A surviving female passenger recalled having asked Borromeo to "leave the cat behind because it scared her," according to the DSWD chief, who led the visiting delegation.

"But they were so enamored with the cat that they took it on board," said Soliman, who was with a separate group in another boat.

Borromeo and Marquez's boat took off about 15 minutes ahead of Soliman's. Because of the river's many bends, she said, her group easily lost sight of the ill-fated craft soon after it left.

Pushing against the strong downstream current, the victims' boat, albeit not yet overloaded, capsized as it was making a turn. One of the passengers had stood up and caused the vessel to lose balance, Soliman said, quoting the accounts of survivors.

Some passengers were flung overboard, while others were trapped underneath the overturned vessel.

Rescue efforts conducted by the 6th Infantry Division, the Army unit stationed in the area, failed to immediately locate Borromeo and Marquez. Two of the rescued passengers were rushed to the hospital.

The carcass of the black cat was later retrieved from the river.

Spirit

Learning of the mishap, the elders of Bago-inged were one in believing that the mysterious cat was actually a "spirit" that "took" the two victims, Soliman said.

By sunset, the mostly women elders started a ritual, laying down cooked rice and fish along the banks. They would repeat the act the next morning.

Soliman said the women performed the "*kanduli*," a way of contacting nature spirits, which is peculiar to settlers along the Rio Grande. "I was told that this was their way of appeasing the spirits and asking them to bring (the victims) out," she said.

The bodies of the two social workers were later recovered about 6 km downstream, in Barangay Kabulnan.

At the necrological services for the 28-year-old Borromeo, Soliman said, both Muslims and Christians gathered at the Immaculate Concepcion Cathedral.

Aside from the secretary, those who paid tribute included Tara Taja, DSWD regional director; Bainon Karon, DWSD secretary for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao; Rodel, Borromeo's younger brother and only sibling; and Daniel Cerezo, who represented the victim's hometown "*barkada*."

Borromeo was actually assigned at the DSWD's main office in Quezon City. Soliman said she had personally seen him at work, remembering him as "a person who serves with a smile. He was very much involved particularly in our projects for Pikit."

"I have found him to be a very optimistic person and this was affirmed by the eulogies; his optimism was their common theme," she said.

Burial

Borromeo's coffin was draped with the Philippine flag, which was later turned over to his mother Felly following his burial at the Cotabato City Catholic Cemetery. Felly is married to a retired government employee.

DSWD officials were also expected to grace the burial of Marquez, 26, a management graduate from Notre Dame University, also in Cotabato City.

The two social workers seemed to have had lived "parallel lives," Soliman said in hindsight.

Both hailed from Cotabato City and served mostly in Mindanao, she noted. Both still single, they came from upper-class families but chose to spend the prime of their lives in social work, "climbing mountains, crossing rivers," rather than pursue less risky, higher paying careers.

Senate now an asylum for political assassins

From page A1

cials on domestic and foreign policy, finance and religion, offering guidance on legislative proposals, and providing the principal element of corporate continuity in Roman affairs.

"The Senate as whole has not, it is true, normally been an independent originator of policy, which was decided in the private councils of a few of its leading members, chiefly those who had at one time or another been successful in the annual elections to the pair of consulships, the senior office of state.

"Yet many other senators, too, were among the political and social elite of ancient Rome. They were also the plutocratic elite."

Grant refers to the historian Dio Cassius, in describing the functions of the Senate before it was reduced to irrelevance and subordination after Julius Caesar.

RP setting

This description is relevant to the events connected to the transformation of the Philippine Senate in recent years into an arena for political assassinations as illustrated by it being used as a forum for the ventilation of charges that assassinate the targets of senatorial accusations that could not pass muster in the courts of justice.

Grant cites Dio Cassus: "Formerly, as we know, all matters were reported to the Senate and to the people, even if they happened at a distance. Hence all learned of them and many recorded them; and consequently the truth regarding them—no matter to what extent fear or favor, friendship or enmity, colored reports of certain writers—as always to a certain extent to be found in the works of other writers who wrote of the same events and in the public records."

Rumors of political life proliferated in ancient Rome. Grant quotes Nero's friend, Petronius, who depicted "this proliferation of unreliable rumors," a situation that grips today's Filipino society for which the Philippine Senate has become the spawning ground of unverified rumors catalogued in the privileged speech, a ticket for the abuse of parliamentary immunity.

Petronius, prefiguring the poisonous rumor mill that is Manila 2002, writes: "People would rather swallow a lighted candle. Than keep a secret that smacks in the least of scandal. The quietest whisper in the royal hall. Is out in the flash of buttonholing passers-by against a wall; And it's not enough that it's broadcast to the nation—Everyone gets it with improvement and elaboration."

Grant asks: "How, then, can we defend ourselves against these dubious reports, and sift out whatever grains of truth can be detected in them?"

This question addresses us, as well.

Popular view disputed

A new book on "The Assassination of Julius Caesar: A People's History of Ancient Rome," by Michael Parenti, who disputes the popular view depicting Caesar as a "bold and brilliant figure flawed by his lust for power and victim of a necessary murder to preserve the republic."

A review of the book by Robin Blake in the Financial Times says that Parenti disputes the popular view arguing that "Caesar was a political and social radical, who took up the cause of the plebeians in what had always an intense and violent struggle to improve their lot against the senatorial oligarchy."

"Viciously opposing anyone presuming to improve the grim lot of the plebes, the patricians moved swiftly to protect their privileges," says the review. "They would trump up charges against the successive reformers (or class traitors) and if that failed they murdered them. This line culminates in Caesar himself, the most vigorous and able, as well as the last of the reformers."

By Parenti's account, says the review, "Caesar did for policies with a notable modern ring: the fairer distribution of state benefits ... more job opportunities, credit control, rent capping and wider property ownership. The review says the book "reads a bit like a rehearsal" for Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Parenti's revisionist view takes Caesar out of the mold of Shakespeare.

It should never be understood that I am alluding to First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, the victim of Sen. Panfilo Lacson's character assassination. Far from it. Mike's profile is a parody of Julius Caesar. Mike is not central in Lacson's attack, which is aimed at damaging the Macapagal presidency.

Slaughterhouse

The point this article makes is that the Senate has evolved since ancient times, as a republic institution, into a slaughterhouse in which political assassination is being carried by men cloaked with the toga of parliamentary immunity.

The historical development of the Philippine Senate has depicted it as the arena in which struggle for power has been fought, although not as gory as the Roman Senate in which Julius Caesar was murdered.

Manuel L. Quezon began the precedent of using the Senate as the platform to challenge the leadership of Speaker Sergio Osmeña for the Philippine independence movement. His launching pad was the 1916 Jones Law which created the Senate in a two-chamber legislature.

Since then, many of the major attacks on the presidency were launched from the Senate. The difference between then and now was that, senators were more elegant in their stratagems to challenge the presidency. It was from the Senate presidency where Ferdinand Marcos launched his challenge to the first Macapagal presidency.

The Senate as a debating chamber provided intellectual illumination with its illustrious patrician membership culled from the Filipino intellectual and social elite. In the past, the privilege of parliamentary immunity, a shield against tyranny and oppression, was hardly abused to serve as the launching pad for political assassination disguised as acts "in aid of legislation."

With the advent of political populism and the age of the ascendancy of entertainment celebrity in politics, the Senate has been degraded into an asylum for political hit men and for military renegades who serve as part-time senators and who spend much of their time plotting conspiracies to overthrow democratic governments.

How to crack a joke

From page A1

coming to your nearest newsstand.

Reader's Digest, which sees 35,000 attempts at humor every month, is offering several articles in its September issue to aid the humor-challenged, including "How to Tell a Joke," "Who's Funny Now," and its lists of the best jokes and funniest films of all time.

The jokes include some groaners (Christopher Columbus and Leif Ericsson always lose at poker because they can't beat the Straits of Magellan).

But there are some sharp one-liners, too.

"We just really thought that people could use a laugh," said executive editor Marcia Rockwood. "We understand how important a laugh is to people and how they really turn to us to get that lift."

For 60 years, Reader's Digest has been inviting readers to send in their own jokes and anecdotes. The monthly collection called "Life in These United States" first appeared in the March 1943 issue and has been joined over the years by "Laughter, The Best Medicine," "All in a Day's Work," and "Humor in Uniform."

At first, readers were offered $100—big money in 1943—if their funny story made "Life in These United States." Now it's $300.

This month, the Chappaqua-based magazine is inviting readers to call in and tell a favorite joke over the phone. It will be recorded and judged, and the five best performers will get the chance to take the stage at a New York City comedy club.

Of course, the Reader's Digest brand of humor is mild, especially when it comes to sex and religion.

"We're in the Seinfeld, Cosby, Jay Leno type of humor," Rockwood said. "We don't do nasty."

Leno is among those quoted in the article on joke-telling.

"Never say 'but seriously' after a joke," he says. "It doesn't work. Just move on to the next joke."

Bill Scheft, a writer for David Letterman, says: "Don't get halfway through the joke and start to improvise. Like, don't say, 'Oh, I forgot, the guy was 6-foot-7 and dressed as a marionette.'"

Comedian Julia Sweeney advises: "Avoid announcing that the joke is going to be hysterical. And don't look people in the eye afterward expecting them to be really amused."

The article on "Who's Funny Now" crowns Jim Carrey, Jane Kaczmarek, Bernie Mac, Hugh Grant, Jon Stewart, Ray Romano and Reese Witherspoon.

The list of funniest movies since 1964 includes acknowledged classics such as "Dr. Strangelove" and "Annie Hall" but also "Planes, Trains and Automobiles."

Readers can go online, where there's a longer list of 104 films from as far back as 1925. *AP*

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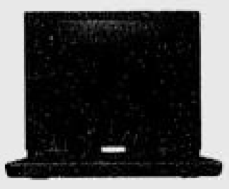

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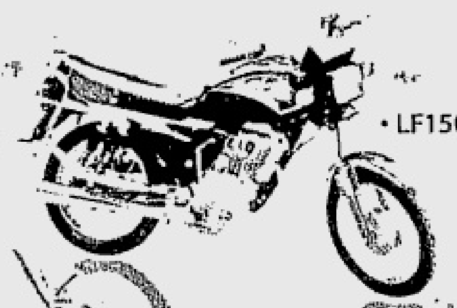

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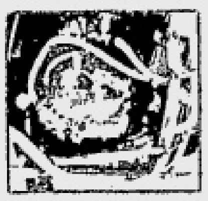

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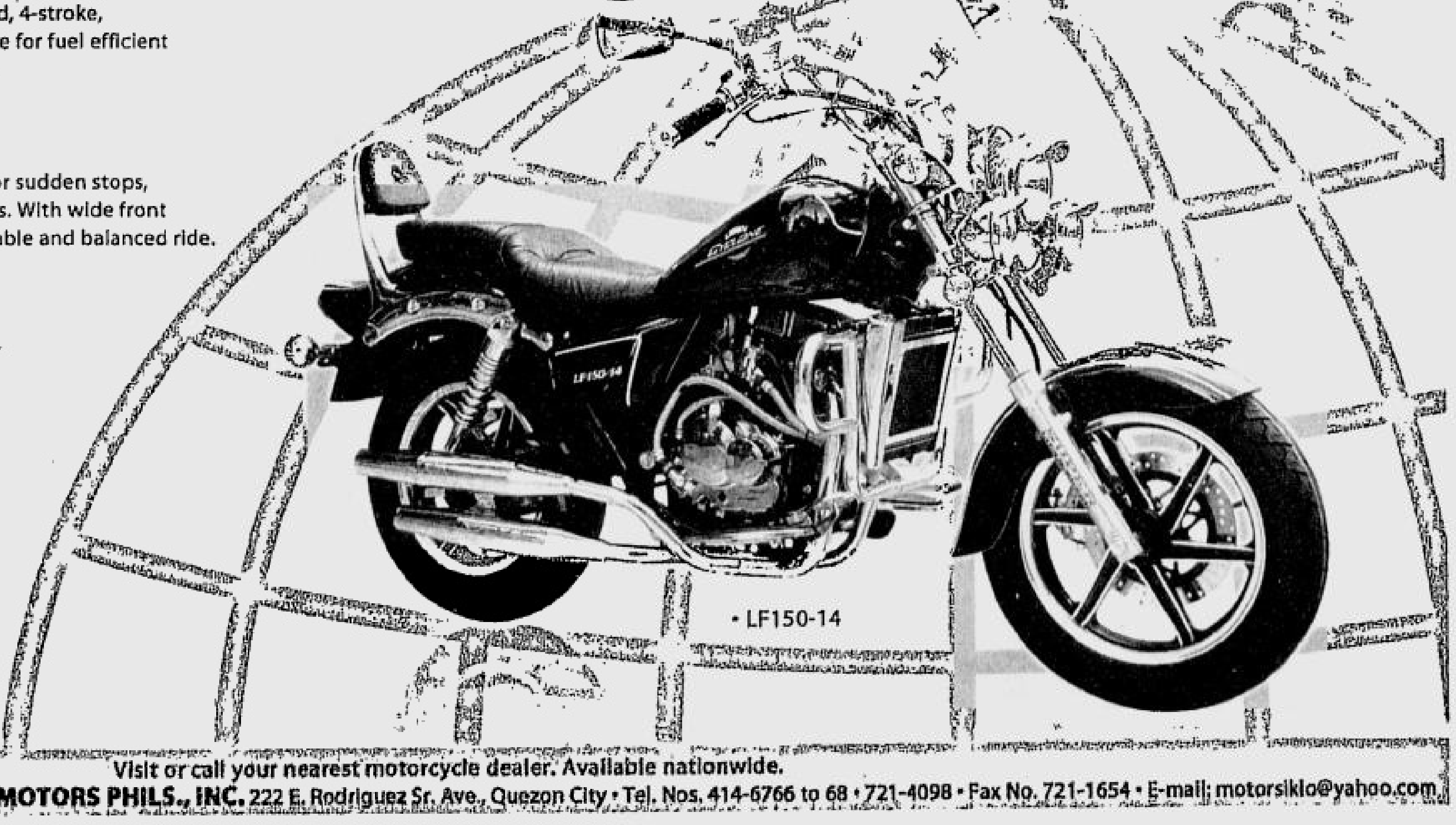

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Jose Pidal probe won't include 2 SC justices

From page A1

has cited 24 respondents as having committed questionable acts with the First Gentleman. They include 11 public officers, two Supreme Court justices, seven private individuals, one law office and three media-related personalities.

The blue ribbon has broken up Lacson's charges against them into 14 separate counts:

- That the First Gentleman's office is "the place where criminal minds are given unlimited funds and access to government resources for illegal purposes were manufactured, concocted stories and blatant lies are orchestrated."
- That Lacson has "in his possession voluminous documents and written testimonies of witnesses to prove that tons of money have been delivered and are being delivered to Jose Miguel Arroyo."
- That the First Gentleman, as his wife's campaign manager when she ran for vice president in 1998, reported only P50.2 million (to the Commission on Elections) when the contributions received amounted to P321 million.
- That the unreported contributions (about P270 million) were possibly placed in a vault, in foundations and in secret bank accounts.
- "That per his witness' account, P1 billion or more is coming" to Jose Miguel Arroyo at his office.
- "That there are more bank accounts, investments abroad and large tracts of land and real estate properties purchased here and abroad by the The Incredible Hulk (the First Gentleman)."
- That the First Gentleman gave Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus (then chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines) a brown envelope containing a large amount of money in US dollars sometime in the second week of July 2001.
- That he has evidence that the First Gentleman is laundering money:

(a) Through the bank accounts of fictitious person "Jose Pidal," whose signature is similar to that of Jose Miguel Arroyo.

(b) That by inference, Jose Pidal and Jose Miguel Arroyo are one and the same persons.

(c) Through the bank accounts of three persons, Kelvin Tan, Thomas Toh and Vicky Toh.

(d) That Kelvin Tan issued "pay to cash" checks in large amounts which were cashed by a certain Antonio Labrador.

- That Ephraim Genuino of the Philippine Gaming and Amusement Board, Ed Manda of the Manila International Airport Authority, Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante of the agriculture department, Alfonso Cusi of the Philippine Ports Authority, Teddy Cruz of the Light Rail Transit Authority, Corpus, Virgilio Angelo of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, and former Chair Ernest Villareal of the Public Estates Authority are part of the "criminal group" headed by the First Gentleman and based in his office.
- That Rey Nadal, Ronaldo Puno, Victor Padilla and Mary Ong formed part of the group.
- That the two associate justices of the Supreme Court are also part of the group.
- That two members of the press, columnists Ramon Tulfo and Alex Magno, along with Marissa Bondoc, wife of columnist Jarius Bondoc, are likewise in that group.
- That the law offices of Carpio Villaraza and Cruz, acting Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez, Presidential Political Adviser Jose Rufino, Franklin Fuentebella, Lucio Co and Reghis Romero were involved in questionable donations.
- That Lacson has vital evidence regarding the murderers and mastermind in the killing of Supt. John Campos.

In the statement, Senator Arroyo said the blue ribbon committee could not take up the criminal charges against the murderers of Campos as this should be left to the courts.

Opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara, chair of one of the three committees tasked with conducting the inquiry, said he was proposing that the hearings begin on Wednesday.

Angara, who chairs the committee on constitutional amendments, revision on codes and laws, said he had yet to get feedback from Senator Arroyo on the actual date of the start of the inquiry.

Lacson yesterday stepped up his attacks on the First Gentleman, saying one of his two witnesses will be able to prove that the President's husband and Jose Pidal were "one and the same person" despite continued denials from Malacañang.

"This witness was ... only a foot away when he first saw the First Gentleman signing Jose Pidal on the checks," Lacson said in a statement. "The witness was the one who withdraws (from) and deposits money (in) the Jose Pidal account."

He said the First Gentleman was at a loss on how to defend himself as indicated by his "incredible silence."

Christine O. Avendaño

Expert says signature test used outdated

By Christian V. Esguerra and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

THE METHOD police had used in examining the controversial Jose Pidal signature was "outdated" and therefore, could be unreliable, a computer expert said yesterday.

Ike Señeres, former director general of the National Computer Center, said the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory should have used computer technology in comparing the signature with the specimens submitted by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

The so-called outmoded system led the PNP to conclude that Arroyo could not have signed the Jose Pidal accounts in which he had allegedly hidden millions of pesos in campaign contributions to his wife when she ran for vice president in 1998.

"The technology is very common, but how come the PNP didn't use it?" he asked in a telephone interview with the INQUIRER.

In examining the Jose Pidal signature, the PNP should have used the computer-based Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology, which "compares the characteristics of images using 'fuzzy logic' algorithms," Señeres said.

In the OCR system, the signatures of Jose Pidal and Arroyo are scanned into a computer. The software will then compare each pixel of the two entries.

"You don't need the original copies of the signatures. Reproductions will do," he said. "A replicate will degrade the accuracy of a signature but the copy will not erode it."

Señeres said the OCR was the same technology used in determining the authenticity of paintings, pictures and currencies.

It is also the same principle behind the characters used in gadgets such as Palm pilots and pocket PCs.

The OCR, according to Señeres, is the "cousin" of the Optical Mark Reader system used in lotto and in the counting machines for next year's elections.

Lawyer Patricia A. O. Bunye, spokesperson of Arroyo, defended the findings of the PNP, saying they were based on scientific methods that showed key differences between the specimen signature of Arroyo and the alleged Jose Pidal that the PNP explained point-by-point.

"They think so little of the PNP when it is one of the agencies in the country that has the capability and expertise to undertake a handwriting analysis," Bunye said.

To appease critics, she said the First Gentleman was not averse to getting a second opinion on the signatures probably from the Federal Bureau of Investigation or Scotland Yard. "We have not closed our mind on getting a second opinion; this is an option," she said.

Contrary to Lacson's claim that he was panicking, Arroyo has remained unruffled by the corruption charges thrown against him, according to Bunye.

In an interview with RMN, Bunye said Lacson had been spreading lies about his client, including Arroyo's alleged hiring of 10 PR firms, to make it look like that the First Gentleman was panicking.

"There is no reason for him (Arroyo) to panic. I am not aware of the 10 firms allegedly hired by the First Gentleman and maybe Senator Lacson was just saying this to reinforce his story that the First Gentleman was panicking," she said.

Señeres said the PNP would not spend more than P100,000 for the OCR technology because it would need to purchase only a computer set and the software.

During his term at the NCC during the Estrada administration, Señeres was heavily involved in the computerization program of the PNP.

He is currently the chief executive officer of the National Crime Information System, which assists nine law enforcement agencies, including the PNP, in the acquisition and installation of key software.

Señeres is also in charge of computerizing the entire city of Makati being the chair of its Information and Communications Technology Council.

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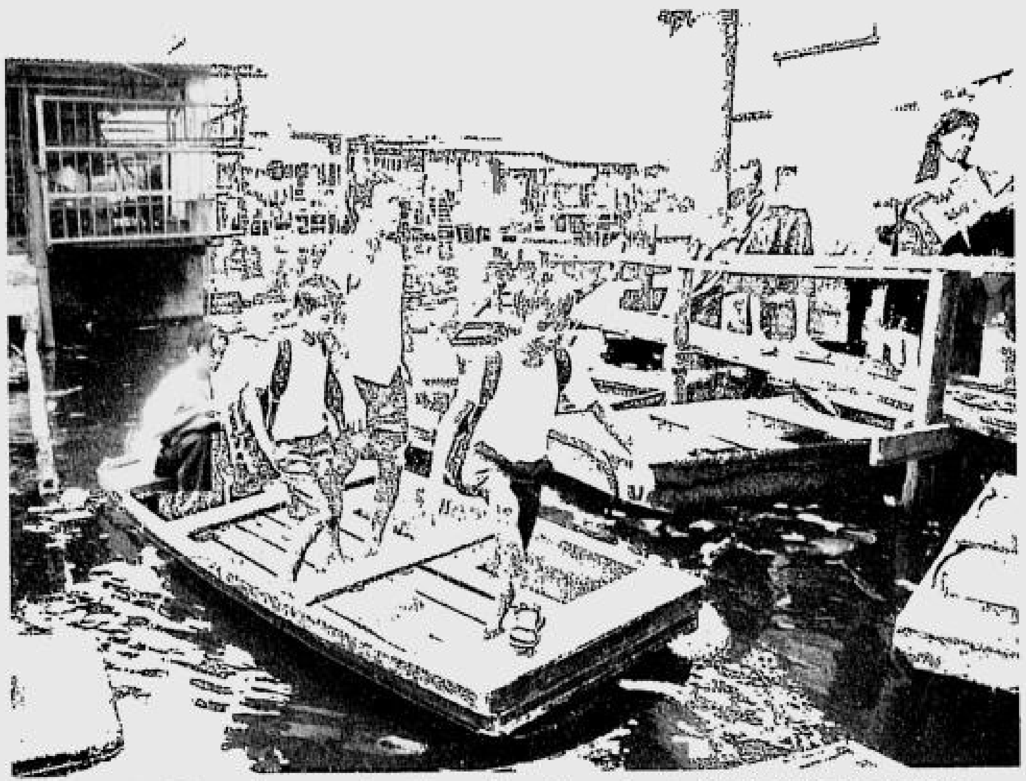

RESIDENTS of Artex Compound say they only get to see local officials during an election campaign period. JOAN BONDOC

Stop using seized vehicles, cops told

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.

POLICEMEN have been ordered to stop using recovered or impounded vehicles.

The National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) issued the order in line with its anti-car theft drive.

It also warned policemen against using stolen cars and/or motorcycles which they have seized or recovered.

Earlier, top police officials observed that a number of police personnel continue to commit "adverse acts," including the use of confiscated vehicles.

In a memorandum, the NCRPO said policemen who use confiscated vehicles "put the police service in bad light."

A Philippine National Police rule, SOP No. 7, prohibits policemen "from using stolen, recovered or impounded motor vehicles."

Policemen were also prohibited from replacing or removing any part or accessory of impounded vehicles, unless properly authorized by their superiors.

The memorandum said those who would be caught would be "severely dealt" with criminal and administrative charges under existing rules.

Heads of the various police units were also warned that police officers who tolerate illegal use of impounded vehicles would also be penalized.

After the anti-drug drive, the NCRPO launched an intensified anti-car theft drive last June. Police said most crimes were being done using either stolen vehicles and/or vehicles without license plates.

Drug couriers, robbers and kidnappers usually use stolen cars to escape, making it difficult for police investigators to identify or locate them, officials added.

They rarely see, meet gov't execs

RESIDENTS of Artex Compound in Malabon City see and meet their government officials, just as rarely as they see the floors of their houses.

Their plight—of having to live in a compound under four feet of floodwater for decades now—seems to be unnoticed, if not neglected.

More than 300 families live in the 20-hectare Artex Compound in Barangay Panghulo. The average level of water submerging their houses is four feet. But when rains pour hard, just like what they experienced these past few weeks, the water level reaches seven feet, or even deeper.

Barangay Kagawad Anther Regudo has been living in the area since he was a high school student in 1977. He told the INQUIRER he had tried asking some government officials for help but until now he and his neighbors remain in their difficult conditions.

"We have gone tired of going after politicians and asking for their help, when as government officials, it is their obligation to help us," Regudo said in Filipino.

In his two decades of living in the area—witnessing how the once dry land became virtually a lake—Regudo could count with his fingers the number of times he saw top government officials visit them.

"(Politicians) just go here during campaign periods. *Pupunta silang ganito kami. Aalis silang ganito pa rin kami* (They visit us and see our condition. They leave without changing anything)," Regudo said.

Weak foundations

Most of the residents there are former employees of the Artex Textile Company, which closed down in 1989. The residents still have a pending case in court against the company. They are also continuing a more-than-a-decade fight for the lots where their houses stand.

The residents are just praying that the typhoons which would visit Metro Manila wouldn't be strong enough to bring down their houses, whose foundations have become weak due to being submerged in water for decades.

While the Artex residents appear to have gotten used to rowing their bancas whenever they want to visit a neighbor, most of them still wish they could see the floors of their houses more often.

The compound dries up only for a few weeks during summer, when the residents usually hold fiestas, basketball tournaments and programs to savor the few days when they could actually walk in the area.

But most of the year, the residents just stay idle in the second floor of their houses, looking at the deep murky water surrounding them, their hopes slowly drowning. *Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.*

10 Marikinas eyed to rid urban blight

By Margaux Ortiz

METRO Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chair Bayani Fernando, it seems, has a ready solution to solving the biggest problem in the country today.

His answer: Build 10 Marikinas or like cities within a 50-100 km radius of the metropolis to eradicate urban blight.

Fernando told reporters last week he plans to accomplish this if he wins as vice president in next year's elections.

He said that complete communities with the industrial, commercial and residential components—cities patterned after Marikina—will lure the children of the present generation to migrate to the "suburbs" and thus de-congest Metro Manila.

He said one city would hold about 1,000 residential homes. The grand project would involve efficient transport systems, like the light rail transit system.

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What Drives You CALTEX

BF sinks logic in urinals

By Margaux Ortiz

SOME mayors are repulsed just by thinking about them. Women sometimes take a second look. Men, on the other hand, simply use them for quick relief.

But to Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chair Bayani Fernando, there is more to the pink urinals that have sprung up along major thoroughfares in the metropolis.

According to him, the urinals are a symbol of order and discipline.

Fernando stressed that the simple steel structures erected conspicuously along roads catered to a basic human need.

Urinating is not a habit but a need, said the MMDA chair while responding to objections posed by several Metro Manila mayors who believe the urinals encouraged people to pee in public.

"Where do you expect people to do it (urinate)?" Fernando asked.

"The urinals are supposed to empower people because they are given an option," he stressed.

Before the urinals were set up, men usually urinated on walls, the back of lamp posts, parked vehicles and even on the street.

As for the urinals' striking color, Fernando said pink was the MMDA's designated color for pedestrians.

"All MMDA structures are colored pink: pink waiting sheds, pink urinals," he said.

He added this was to make sure the pedestrians know which structures were constructed for public use.

"Pink is also the symbol of the dream of every Metro Manilan: a clean and orderly city," Fernando said.

He added in jest, "The color also means that every Metro Manilan is in the pink of health."

Fernando said the urinals were designed not to have doors to deter crime.

He explained that anything could happen "behind closed doors"—like various petty crimes.

The MMDA chair stressed that urinals were much easier to maintain than public toilets and were less prone to emit foul odor.

Digging from experience, Fernando noted that such urinals had been successfully used in Marikina City for nine years, where he was three-term mayor.

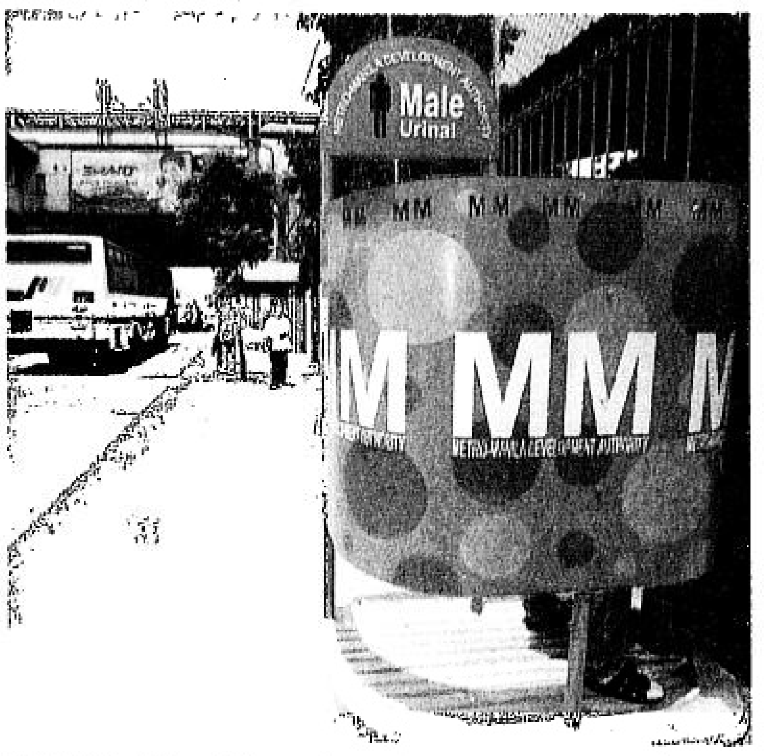
MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno said the urinal features a funnel made of rubber to prevent corrosion and foul odor.

The funnel, where people pee, is attached to a tube which leads to a septic tank underneath, he added.

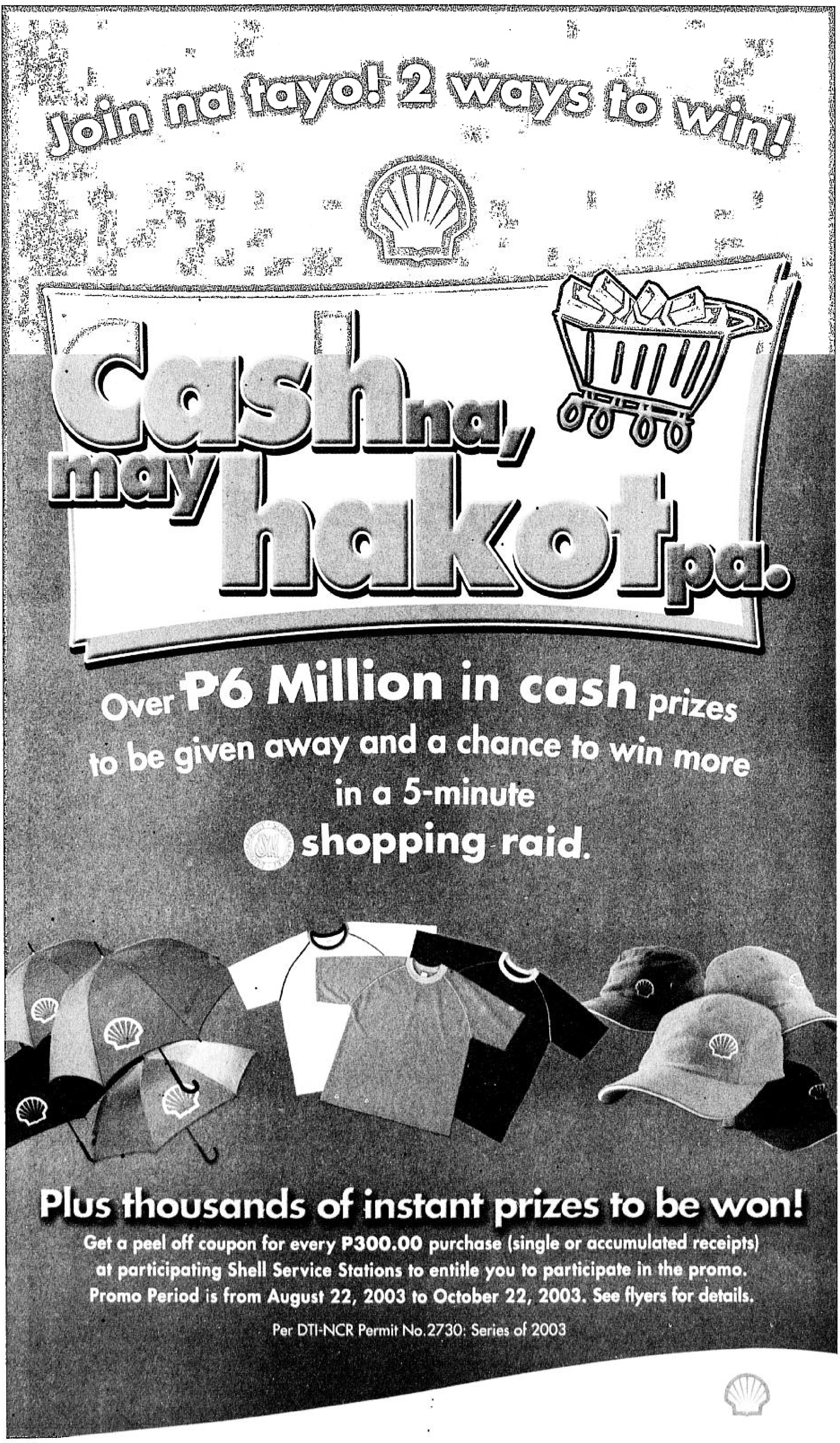
Nacianceno said water trucks with high pressure hoses clean the urinals everyday.

He added that the MMDA was shelling out P35,000 for each urinal and was aiming to put up close to 500 urinals in Metro Manila.

As of now, the MMDA has constructed 250 urinals all over the metropolis, he said. They will be building more barring more objections.



MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando says there is more than meets the eye in regard to the eye-catching urinals like this one on Edsa just outside Camp Crame in Quezon City. RANDY HORMILLOSA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Per DTI-NCR Permit No.2730: Series of 2003

METROBRIEFS

Charge swapping

TWO MEN apparently trying to win the attention of a woman yesterday traded charges of grave threats and assault against one another. Donato Villanueva, 36, who claimed to be a freelance cameraman, filed charges of grave threats against P02 Eric Rano of the Baler Station in Quezon City for allegedly pointing his gun at him. Villanueva told Western Police District investigators that the gun-pointing incident happened yesterday at the 5th floor hallway of the Las Palmas Hotel in Malate, Manila. He said he went to the hotel around 10 a.m. to pick up his ex-girlfriend, Helen Kurokawa, who was scheduled to leave for Japan yesterday at 2:45 p.m. He said Rano, whom he did not know, rode the elevator with him. Both got off on the fifth floor and went straight to room 508 where Kurokawa was staying. Villanueva claimed Rano just drew his .45 caliber revolver and pointed it at him. At the WPD headquarters, Kurokawa said she was surprised to see Villanueva there, adding she did not ask Villanueva to take her to the airport. She said, however, that Rano was a close friend who had gone to the hotel to ask her if she needed him to accompany her to the airport. Rano said he would file charges of assault against Villanueva. *Tarra Quismundo*

Drunk and furious

CARPENTER Jimmy Perocho had just come home from a drinking session on Saturday night and was about to sleep when a stone landed on their roof. Furious, Perocho, 36, went out of their house in Bagong Silang, Caloocan City, to find out who hurled the stone. Police said Perocho saw Larry Salatambos, 22, a neighbor. Thinking Salatambos was the one who hurled the stone, Perocho went inside his house and got a knife. He then went out, police said, and immediately stabbed the victim in his chest. Salatambos died upon arrival in a hospital. Perocho escaped. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Sudden death

DEATH came swiftly to Dave Alde, 22, the other night. Police said Alde was talking to some friends near his house in Labores Extension, Pandacan, Manila, when six unidentified men from the neighborhood appeared around 9 p.m. One of them suddenly and without warning stabbed Alde in the body. Alde ran back to his house but collapsed along the way. Police said he was declared dead upon arrival at the Ospital ng Maynila. Follow-up police operations led to the arrest of one of the suspects, who police identified as Tilpa Akil, 18, of Matiwalas Street, Kahilum I, in the same neighborhood. The five others remain at large. *Tarra Quismundo*

Shot and killed; nabbed

A JEEPNEY driver was shot and killed while a holdupper was arrested in two separate robbery incidents in Quezon City. In the first incident which happened on Saturday morning, two robbers shot driver Dante Gemeda, 32, in the head when he refused to stop his jeepney in front of the National Kidney Institute on East Avenue. Gemeda was rushed to the nearby East Avenue Medical Center, where he died about 9:30 p.m. yesterday. His assailants fled. In Cubao, a holdup suspect was nabbed yesterday after his victims immediately called for help. Raynaldo Samil, 21, of Proj. 4, Quezon City, was arrested by barangay tanods after a brief chase. Samil and two others earlier held up a passenger jeepney. When they got off, the victims ran and informed the tanods about the holdup. Recovered from Samil were a .38 caliber revolver and the wallet of one of the victims minus the P1,700 cash it contained. A backpack of another victim—which contained a cell phone and some accessories—was also not recovered. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

I dead in Navotas fire

A FIRE that hit a small barangay in Navotas City midnight the other day left 60 families homeless and caused the death of a man. Investigation showed the fire, which started around 11:25 p.m., was caused by an unattended lighted candle and razed shanties in Barangay North Bay Boulevard. Barangay chair Vic Palicpic said that during the commotion, a resident there whom he identified as Moises Toquero, suffered a heart attack and died minutes later. *Tarra Quismundo*

Language month rites

THE KOMISYON sa Wikang Filipino is spearheading the celebration of the Buwan ng Wikang Pambansa 2003 this month with the theme "Wikang Filipino, pagyamanin; Wikang Vernakular, huwag limutin; Wikang Ingles, pagbutihin." The highlight of the celebration is on Aug. 29, dubbed as the Araw ng Gawad, where awards will be given to individuals and institutions who have done so much in propagating the use of the national language. The rites will be held at the Grand Boulevard Hotel in Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

SUERTRES 3 2 9
(In exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
16 37 41 43 45 47

METRO

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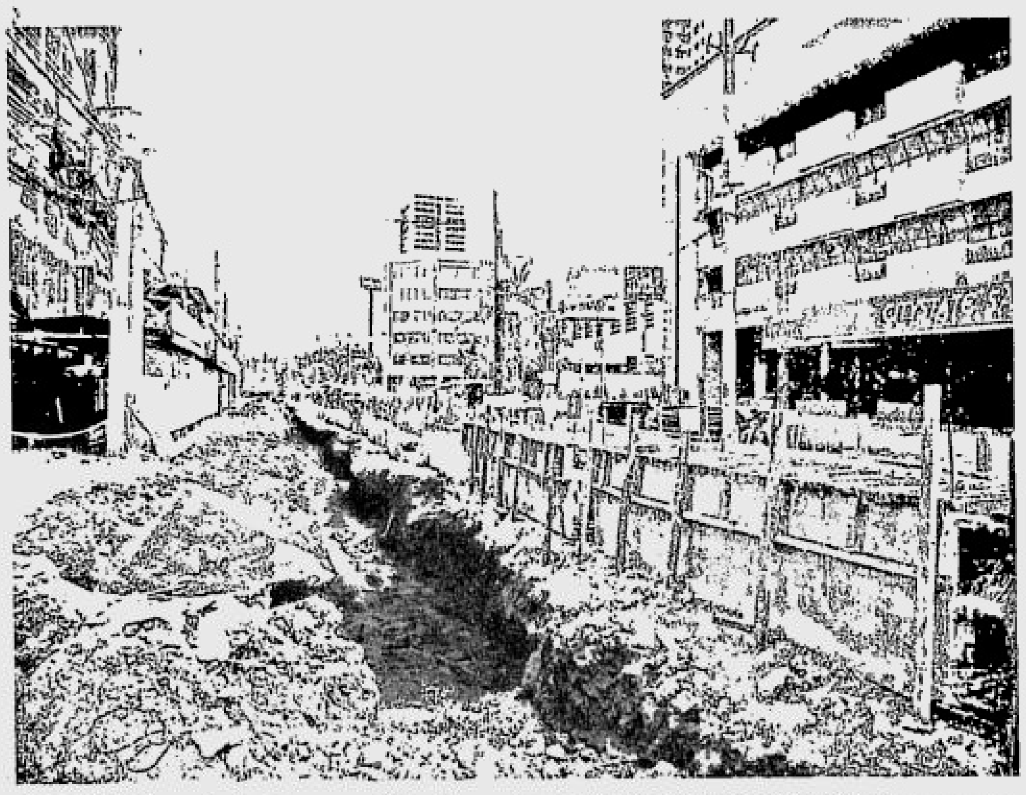
Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**



DIGGINGS intended to improve Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo) in Makati City have become more like open graves to businesses in the area. JESS YUSON

Road diggings killing business in Makati area

Excavations 'burying' shops

By Alcuin Papa

THE INTENDED development of Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo) in Makati City was supposed to save businesses along the key avenue from the perennial flooding in the area.

However, snail-paced construction and other delays in the road improvement work are killing commerce, particularly in the vicinity of the Makati Cinema Square.

Diggings and other roadwork have worsened flooding in this part of Barangay Pio del Pilar on the west, outermost fringe of the Makati Business District.

Thus establishments, including banks, food outlets and gasoline stations, have reported huge losses in sales.

Representatives of business interests in the area said their sales had fallen by almost half since the diggings started last year.

Jomar de Leon, supervisor of the Shakey's pizza parlor branch at the Makati Cinema Square, told the INQUIRER that lost sales averaged 40 to 50 percent a month from year ago figures.

De Leon said because of the diggings that ate up the street in front of their store, jeepneys that usually drove customers to their doorstep had been rerouted.

This, he added, had taken away a lot of their walk-in customers.

Car-riding customers have also been driven away ever since their parking space was isolated by a long, wide, gaping excavation on the street.

Clients who dared park on Chino Roces got their cars towed for obstruction, De Leon lamented.

The Goldilocks food store nearby shared the same problems as that of Shakey's.

Because of this, its sales also dropped 50 percent since the "development work" started, according to Jenny Aguilar, store supervisor.

She related that the mess along Chino Roces had discouraged even their most loyal customers from paying them a visit.

And as if lost business was not enough, the diggings have reportedly brought in an invasion of flies, especially following days of rain.

The insects are lured to the place by the stench of rotting garbage and other refuse that have accumulated in the stagnant water trapped in the man-made ditch.

But Shakey's and Goldilocks are still the lucky ones.

On April 30, Pax Grill, a restaurant, was forced to cease operations because of the lack of customers.

Prior to that, another food store that used to do business beside Goldilocks closed its doors permanently. Thanks to the roadwork.

In July, an organization of about 20 businessmen in the area sent a petition to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to speed up the project.

The MMDA wrote back only to say that the diggings were being delayed by the "lack of materials."

No timeframe was given for the completion of the road improvement project that costs P98 million and stretches 2.424 kilometers from the corner of Arnaiz Avenue to J.P. Rizal Street.

The project, which aims to improve travel conditions along Chino Roces Avenue, is part of the $97-million (P4.85 billion) Metro Manila Urban Transport Integration Project (MMURTRIP) funded by the World Bank and the government.

The project has three implementing agencies—the Department of Public Works and Highways, MMDA and the City of Marikina.

The Pasong Tamo road improvement, one of the five projects assigned to the MMDA, started in September last year and was scheduled to be completed by October 2003.

It includes the construction and de-clogging of drainage systems, installation of streetlights, road concreting and sidewalk clearing.

MMDA engineers had told the INQUIRER that work on the diggings was running behind schedule and that the October deadline was not likely to be met.

However, they claimed that they were doing their best to rush the project.

Uncle of Inquirer employee killed in freak Edsa mishap

A RELATIVE of an INQUIRER employee was killed Saturday night when he was pinned between two buses on Edsa in Makati City.

The Makati City police Traffic Enforcement Unit identified the fatality as Gavino Idjao Sr., 60, a messenger of 121 Road 4 Ext., Joseph Sitt Street, Bagumbayan, Taguig.

Idjao was an uncle of INQUIRER software engineer Adelle Idjao-Geraldo.

Reports said Idjao was on his way home and was about to get off one of the involved buses when he met the accident at the corner of Edsa and Ayala Avenue at about 6 p.m.

Investigation showed that Idjao was on a Baclaran-bound Golden Hi-Way bus (NVJ 884) when he decided to get off at the Edsa-Ayala corner.

Seeing the bus approach his stop, Idjao reportedly already stood up and took a position at the rear doorway of the vehicle.

Suddenly, another bus, a BBL Transport (PVD 161), stopped in front of the speeding Golden Hi-Way bus.

This forced the driver of the Golden Hi-Way bus, Remigio Jimenez, to swerve to the left to avoid hitting the rear of the other vehicle.

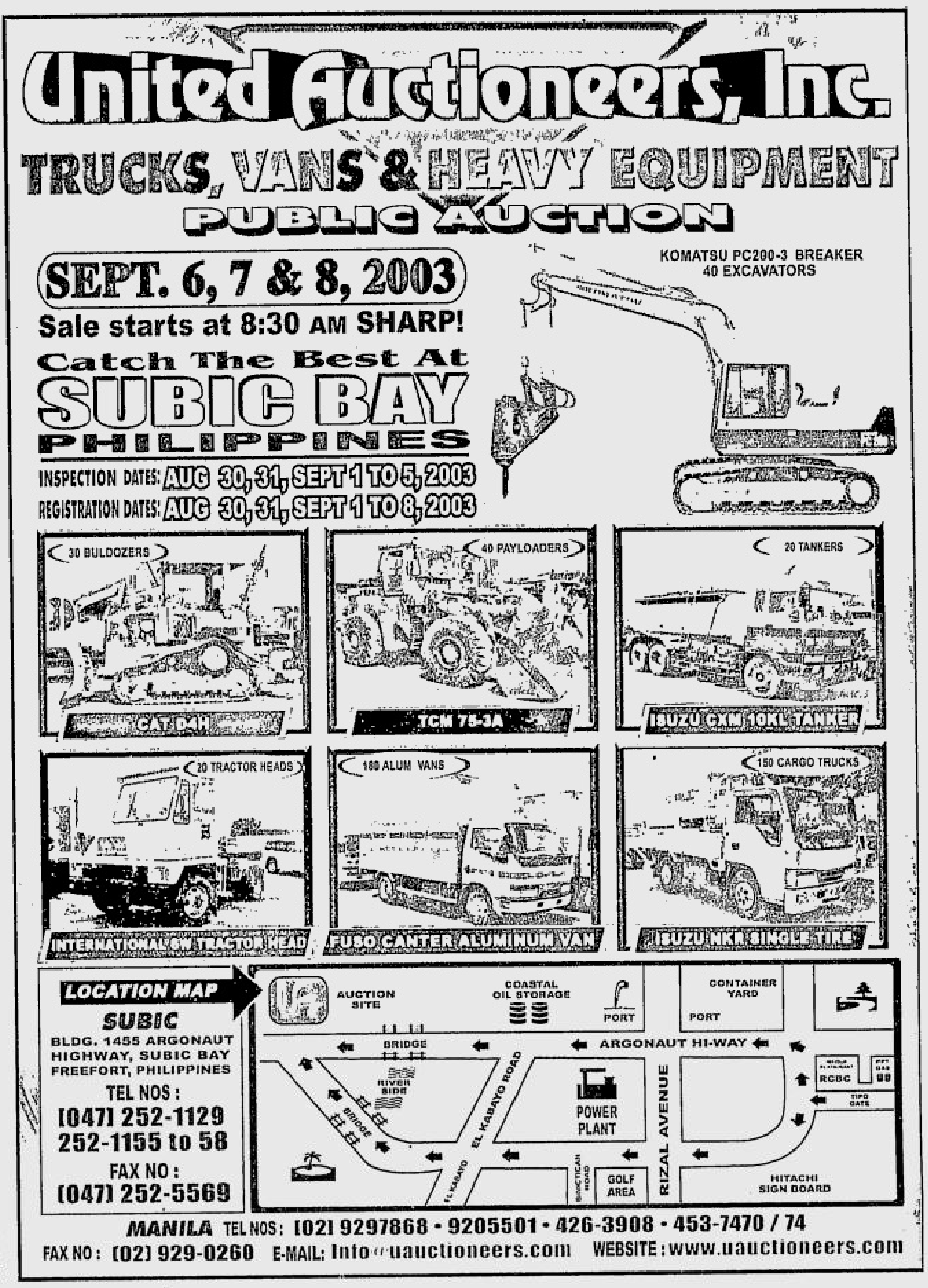
The momentum and the sudden change in direction of the Golden Hi-Way bus reportedly forced Idjao to lean forward and expose his body outside the vehicle.

He was then caught between the rear of the BBL bus and the doorway of the Golden Hi-Way bus.

Idjao was rushed by bus conductor Manuel Ruando to the Makati Medical Center but was declared dead on arrival by doctors.

Makati traffic police then took Ruando and Jimenez into custody as homicide charges were set to be filed against them by the police.

Alcuin Papa



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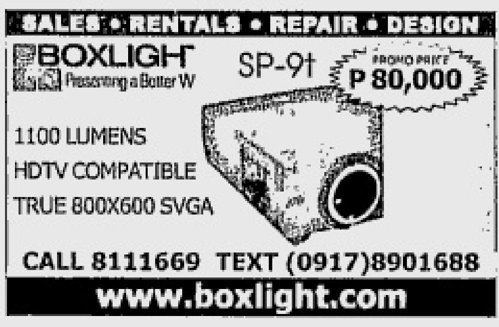
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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ 3-year Alaska revamp pays off /A27

■ Lucky escape gives Clark 1-shot lead /A28

Vengeful Eagles claw Tams

GAMES THURSDAY *(Araneta Coliseum)*
11 a.m.—Ateneo vs NU (Jrs)
1:30 p.m.—Ateneo vs NU (Srs)
4 p.m.—UP vs La Salle (Srs)
6 p.m.—UPIS vs DLS-Zobel (Jrs)

By June Navarro

THE ATENEO Blue Eagles wiped the slate clean yesterday.

Finally underscoring their worth as defending champions, the Eagles got back at the Far Eastern Tamaraws with an impressive 87-63 victory to forge into a tie for the lead with their latest victims in the UAAP basketball tournament at the Araneta Coliseum.

Ateneo was a virtual three-point factory in the final quarter as it avenged the last of its two losses in the first round with its eighth straight victory to catch up with FEU at 8-2.

Wesley Gonzales drained two triples while Larry Fonacier and LA Tenorio buried a trey each as the Eagles broke a 55-55 deadlock and then finished off the Tams with all guns ablaze.

JC Intal actually sparked Ateneo's end-game blitz, pumping in six of the Eagles' first 10 points in the final period while the Tamaraws went scoreless for five minutes.

Gonzales then ignited the Eagles' shooting spree with a three-pointer and Ateneo went on take a 77-57 advantage after successive triples by Tenorio and Fonacier and Paolo Bugia's three-point play off Gerard Jones.

As the Eagles frolicked on the offensive end, the Tamaraws went stone cold as starters Dennis Miranda, Rhagnee Sinco, Arwind Santos and Jones failed to respond to the challenge.

Ateneo coach Joel Banal offered another explanation to the Eagles' amazing run that had them outscoring the enemy, 35-11, in the last quarter.

"We just caught them flatfooted with the zone press. We made them miss their outside shots and we controlled the boards," said Banal. "To top it all, we buried our jumpers."

Rich Alvarez topscored with 18 points while Gonzales and Fonacier chipped in

VENGEFUL/ A28

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BIMP-EAGA GAMES

Minda tankers shine; host runners prevail

By Dennis U. Eroa

PUERTO PRINCESA, Palawan—Mindanao rode on the explosive performances of Nikko Cao Hok, Phyll Julius Iglesias, Carlo Rodriguez and Izah Sueno to reign supreme in the 3rd BIMP-EAGA Friendship Games swimming competitions which ended yesterday at the sprawling Puerto Princesa Sports Complex here.

The 18-year-old Cao Hok, a member of the medal-rich Iligan City swimming team, Iglesias and Rodriguez churned their way to four gold medals each, while Sueno, 17, of Koronadal City sizzled with three golds.

Mindanao tankers also captured 14 silvers and 6 bronzes.

South Sulawesi, bannered by Andy Gumilang (3 golds) and Jessica Laurens (2 golds), finished second with eight golds. Sabah, which also got three golds from Lai Kwan Chui, finished third with a 7-5-4 gold-silver-bronze haul.

Cao Hok and Sueno will see action for multi-titled La Salle while Iglesias will represent Santo Tomas in the coming UAAP swimming competitions.

"It wasn't as easy as it seemed to be," said Cao Hok, who like Sueno is taking up sports management at La Salle-Taft."This victory will strengthen my resolve to do good in the UAAP."

Cao Hok, Iglesias and Rodriguez won golds in three relay events (4x400 freestyle, 4x200 freestyle and 4x100 medley) aside from their individual victories. Iglesias ruled the 100m freestyle at the start of the competitions last Saturday, while Cao Hok beat Filomeno Kepti of Palawan in the 100m backstroke yesterday with a time of 1:07.07. Rodriguez beat Cao Hok in the 100m butterfly with a time of 1:01.94.

Sueno, winner of two events (200 and 400m freestyle) anchored the Mindanao team to victory in the 4x400 medley.

Joebert Pilapil of the host city won the 200m freestyle, beating Brunei's Mohd Husain with a time of 2:26.34.

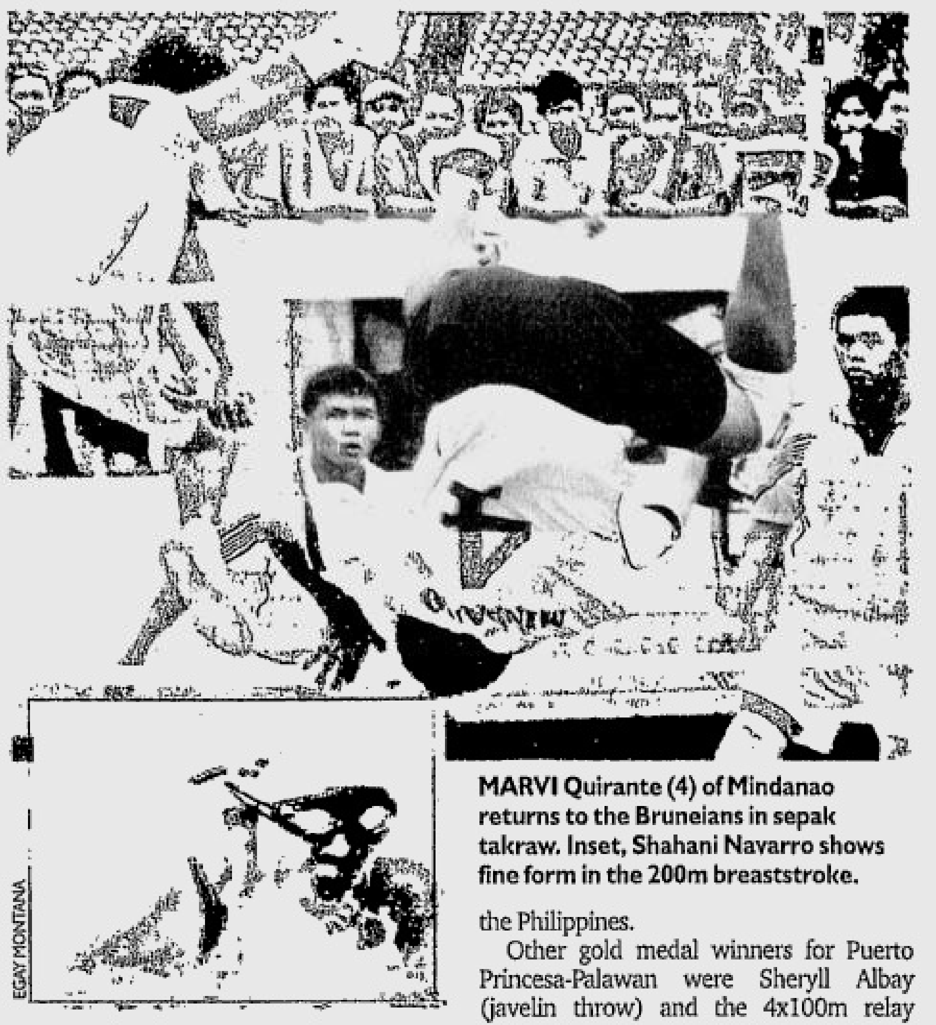
Puerto Princesa City-Palawan, ably supported by Mayor Edward Hagedorn and Gov. Joel T. Reyes, struck mightily in athletics with Bernardita Mag-aso winning her second gold after ruling the 800m run with a time of 2:20.5.

Mindanao's Judelyn Miranda finished second in 2:25.9, while Christine Lumuwu of North Sulawesi ended third in 2:25.9.

Mag-aso also relegated Miranda to the silver in the 1500m run last Saturday.

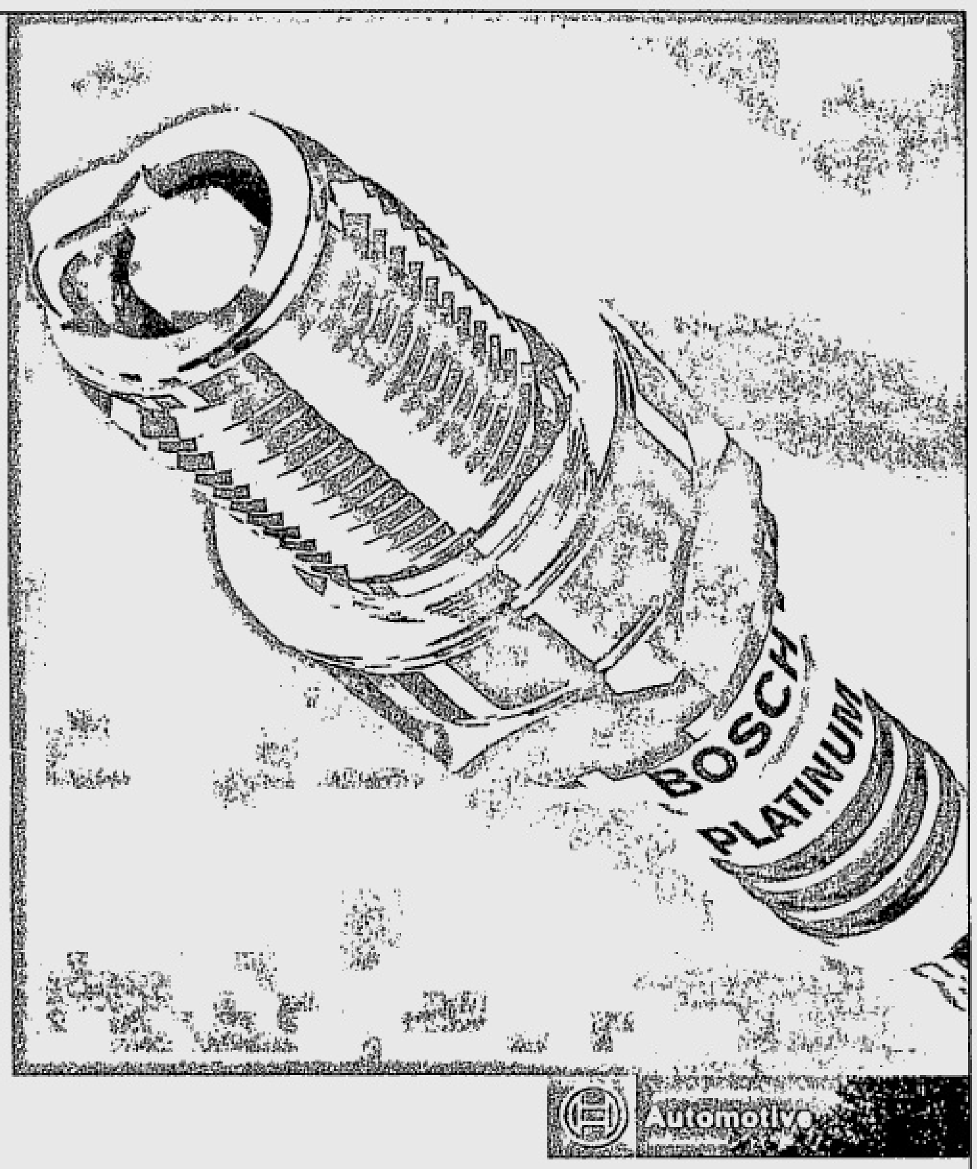
Mindanao's Roy Ocon also added the 800m to his earlier victory in the 1500m as Mindanao pressed its assault for the overall title of this games featuring the best athletes from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Other gold medal winners for Puerto Princesa-Palawan were Sheryll Albay (javelin throw) and the 4x100m relay team. Mindanao won through the efforts of Herbett Adovo (long jump) and Grace Tesaluna(discuss throw).



EGAY MONTANA

MARVI Quirante (4) of Mindanao returns to the Bruneians in sepak takraw. Inset, Shahani Navarro shows fine form in the 200m breaststroke.



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Lifestyle check on PSC car park

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

IT will be very tough, Eric Buhain said of the job when he first assumed the Philippine Sports Commission chairmanship.

But that was, let's see, two, three years and many leaner months ago?

It's a pity that nobody has asked Mr. Buhain if succeeding events had confirmed him to be a reliable forecaster.

Actually, the PSC Big Boss could've been wrong, all too wrong in his initial prediction... Why? A very reliable tip from the seat of Philippine amateur sports said all one has to do is visit the tree-shaded PSC car park at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex to conclude that the years have been very rewarding for Mr. Buhain and his immediate staff. The great flash of brand new cars in the PSC car park would speak of how these staffers have progressed tremendously, way, way ahead of poor Philippine sports itself.

Listen to the tip: *"Lahat may bagong kotse,* CRV *si* A. Blank, M. Blank, D. Blank; Ed Blank has a Pajero. I. Blank, S. Blank, E. Blank with a Honda each. T. Blank has a Crosswind."

* * *

Well, we are not about to accuse these PSC staffers of graft, just because they've acquired new cars.

What has intrigued and amazed concerned observers, mainly from ill-fed national sports associations, was the almost simultaneous arrival of these late-model vehicles at the PSC car park.

Ok, we cannot use these cars to demand an investigation into the bank accounts of these lucky people.

But, I told my informer, can't authorities do something drastic for a change?

Like what? he said.

Why don't they subject the PSC parking lot at Rizal Memorial Park to a lifestyle check.

Ha, ha, that's a great idea, he said.

Even if a car park doesn't have a bank account?

* * *

Seriously speaking, growing suspicions of financial misdeeds inside the PSC could be stopped with an immediate audit of the national sports funding agency.

Frankly, your reporter here started contacting knowledgeable sources at Rizal Memorial mainly to check on the progress of preparations for the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games. But what we received instead was a blast of frustration and complaints against the PSC and several staffers close to its chief.

We therefore ended up conducting this inquiry through the popular texting method. Here's the initial reply message we got: "PSC is in trouble, it has not remitted to GSIS contributions of contractual employees for four months; unpaid reimbursements from NSAs amount to P8 million."

Well, that's not a big problem. It could be readily remedied, I suggested.

If not, I added, why don't they demand an audit of the PSC?

"Walang audit, siyempre, not unless somebody requests for a special audit, but they could make immediate remedies if the audit is not made soon.

From what we know, there's a resident auditor at PSC.

Answered our second source: "Yes, but the auditor, formerly with the GAB, always joins the RP delegation since 1997 to the SEA Games and Asian Games."

Maybe that's part of her job.

"She has been lovey-dovey with the PSC, she needs to be recalled." Well, that's easier said than done, she could be nice and do her job at the same time.

The informer demanded that your reporter here calls on the PSC to make an accounting of the Samsung sponsorship to the tune of P60 million and the two fund-raising shows for the Gintong Medalya program.

"*Sana* you requested a special audit, so we would know why the PSC has negative P80 million in its ledger," he suggested.

Explanation: All this reporter had originally suggested was a lifestyle check on the PSC car park. Nothing more.

Another thing. The move was not, in any way, inspired by grave accusations hurled by Sen. Ping Lacson on First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

For the record, we had noted that, when Buhain took over as PSC chief, his sparkling sports and academic credentials could indeed be of great help: A total of 15 gold medals in the SEA Games, TOYM awardee in 1991, member of the US NCAA All America team, back-to-back athlete of the year awardee, cum laude with a BS Finance at La Salle Philadelphia.

Any suggestion that Buhain's credentials have been outshone, outsparkled by the brand new cars at the PSC car park is purely coincidental.

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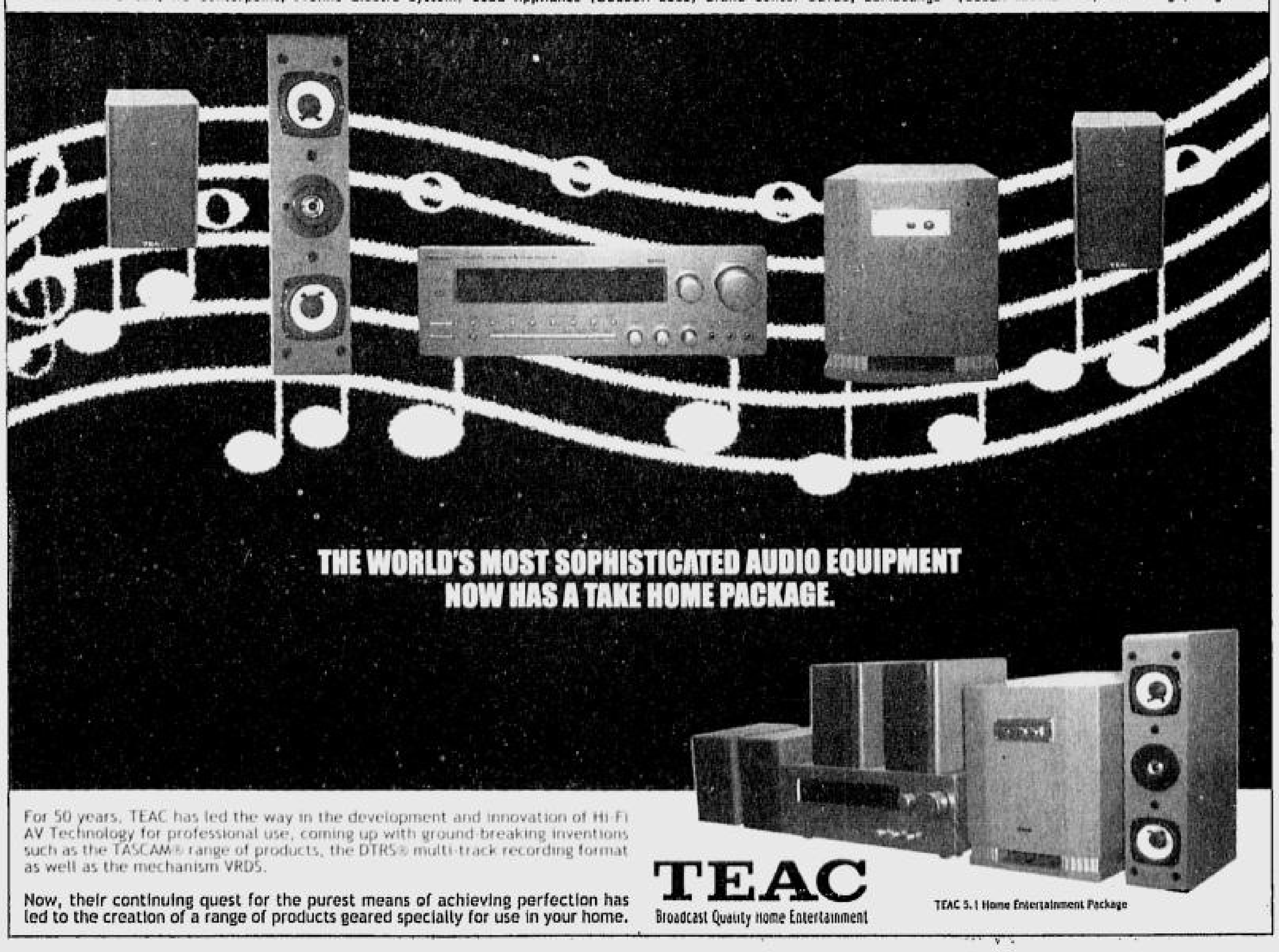
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Stags, Bombers battle for NC lead

GAMES TODAY
(*Rizal Memorial Coliseum*)
11:30 a.m.—JRU vs SSC-R (jrs/srs)
3:30 p.m.—UPHR vs Mapua (jrs/srs)

STANDINGS	W	L
Letran	7	4
JRU	7	4
SSC-R	7	4
Mapua	6	4
SBC	6	5
UPHR	4	7
CSB	4	8
PCU	3	8

DEFENDING champion San Sebastian and Jose Rizal clash for the solo lead today even as Perpetual Help-Rizal tries to stay alive in the NCAA basketball tournament at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Sporting identical 7-4 records along with the idle Letran Knights, the Heavy Bombers and the Stags hope to sustain their winning runs and improve their chances of reaching the Final Four.

The Stags go into the 1:30 p.m. match fresh from three consecutive victories while the Bombers, behind the heroics of Marco Paolo Fajardo, had posted back-to-back victories at the expense of Philippine Christian and Mapua.

The Altas tackle the Cardinals at 5:30 p.m. seeking to remain in the fight for a semifinal slot.

A victory by the Cardinals automatically ends the semifinal aspirations of the Altas, who yanked the rug from under the San Beda Lions on Friday for a 4-7 record.

The Altas, however, enjoy a slight edge, having outsteadied the Cardinals (6-4) in the first round.

But things have changed since then as Mapua coach Horacio Lim has started to draw superb performances from his frontline of Nat Cruz, Raymund Dula, Christian Guevarra, Andrew Salud and Jeff Gonzales.

So far, the PCU Dolphins and the College of St. Benilde Blazers are definitely out of the Final Four with eight setbacks each.

The Blazers console themselves, however, by having moved out of the cellar after tripping the Knights for their fourth win in 12 outings Saturday.

Left in the basement are the Dolphins, who lost all of their games in the second round to drop to 3-8.

June Navarro

3-year Alaska revamp pays off

By June Navarro

IT'S back to the winner's circle for the Alaska Aces. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

ALASKA coach Tim Cone was on the brink of calling it quits in the last two seasons.

But his patience paid off when his Aces downed the Coca-Cola Tigers, 91-86, the other night to capture the Samsung-PBA Invitational Championship title at the Philsports Arena.

"After those years, 2001 and 2002, I thought I've lost it. Young coaches in the league were coming up with newer and better stuff and it was a real shake to my confidence," said Cone, after securing the 11th title for the Wilfred Uytengsu-franchise.

The win also moved Cone past Norman Black (10 titles) and within four of the record 15 championships held by his idol, the legendary Baby Dalupan.

"I'll be very honest with you. I was really down in 2001 and 2002. I even opted to resign and it took some encouraging words from Mr. Uytengsu to keep me going," said Cone.

Cone's frustration was understandable.

After scoring its breakthrough win in the 1994 Governors Cup, Alaska had dominated the league, winning seven of the next 12 conferences including a grand slam in 1996.

Alaska finally missed a title in the 1999 season but won again in the 2000 All-Filipino. That proved to be Alaska's last until Saturday.

Cone said the come-from-behind Finals victory was something special.

"I had a tremendous amount of success in my career. I won a grand slam and did a lot of nice things but there's something special about this one even though it's short and not well-attended," said Cone.

More than anything else, the victory justified Alaska's decision, which was severely criticized then, to break up the nucleus of its highly successful squad in favor of a rebuilding program anchored on youth.

The Aces first gave up certified stars Johnny Abarrientos, Poch Juinio, Bong Hawkins, Jojo Lastimosa and Jeffrey Cariaso and then later on Rodney Santos and Kenneth Duremdes.

Alaska struggled as Cone slowly rebuilt its team with the acquisition of Don Allado. Soon Ali Peek, EJ Feihl and John Arigo came aboard and this year, the final pieces of the championship puzzle emerged with the acquisition of Mark Cortez and Brandon Lee Cablay.

Uytengsu said he expects more championships from his new breed of Aces moments after the awarding ceremony but Cone had mixed emotions about the victory.

"It's bittersweet because it's against (Coca-Cola coach) Chot (Reyes), Johnny (Abarrientos), Edward (Juinio) and Jeffrey (Cariaso). I know they really wanted this from the bottom of their souls but I was just thankful that we had the opportunity and was able to take it," said Cone.

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In the news

A serving of 7 questions, from easiest to toughest, each with a corresponding point value. Can you score a perfect 100 (or, at least, beat the other 'sports genius/geniuses' beside you)?

1 > 3 Pts.

☐ True /☐ False: PBA Commissioner Noli Eala fined Red Bull Barako P250,000 for making "a mockery" of its game against Talk 'N Text last Aug. 13.

2 > 5 Pts.

Who did Francisco "Django" Bustamante beat in the finals of the International Challenge of Champions 9-ball Open at the Mohegan Sun Casino in Uncasville, Connecticut?

☐ John Horsfall (Canada)
☐ Efren "Bata" Reyes (Philippines)

3 > 7 Pts.

Who is currently the world's No. 1 male tennis player based on the ATP's entry system rankings?

☐ Andre Agassi (USA)
☐ Juan Carlo Ferrero (Spain)
☐ Roger Federer (Switzerland)

4 > 10 Pts.

What US state hosted the recent 2003 Big League Softball World Series?

☐ Michigan
☐ Pennsylvania
☐ California

5 > 20 Pts.

Who's the coach of the NBA-powered US basketball team competing in the Fiba Americas Olympic Qualifying Tournament in San Juan, Puerto Rico?

☐ Greg Popovich
☐ Larry Brown
☐ George Karl
☐ Maurice Cheeks

6 > 25 Pts.

In becoming the latest first-time winner of a major golf title, Shaun Micheel ruled the PGA Championship in Rochester, New York, with what total score?

☐ 270
☐ 272
☐ 274
☐ 276

7 > 30 Pts.

Straight from the horse's mouth: Name the local horse jockey who claims horse owner Alfredo Po threatened to shoot him after he disobeyed the latter's instruction for him to deliberately lose a race aboard Top Quest at the Santa Ana Race Park in Makati City last Aug. 8.

ANSWERS/ A31

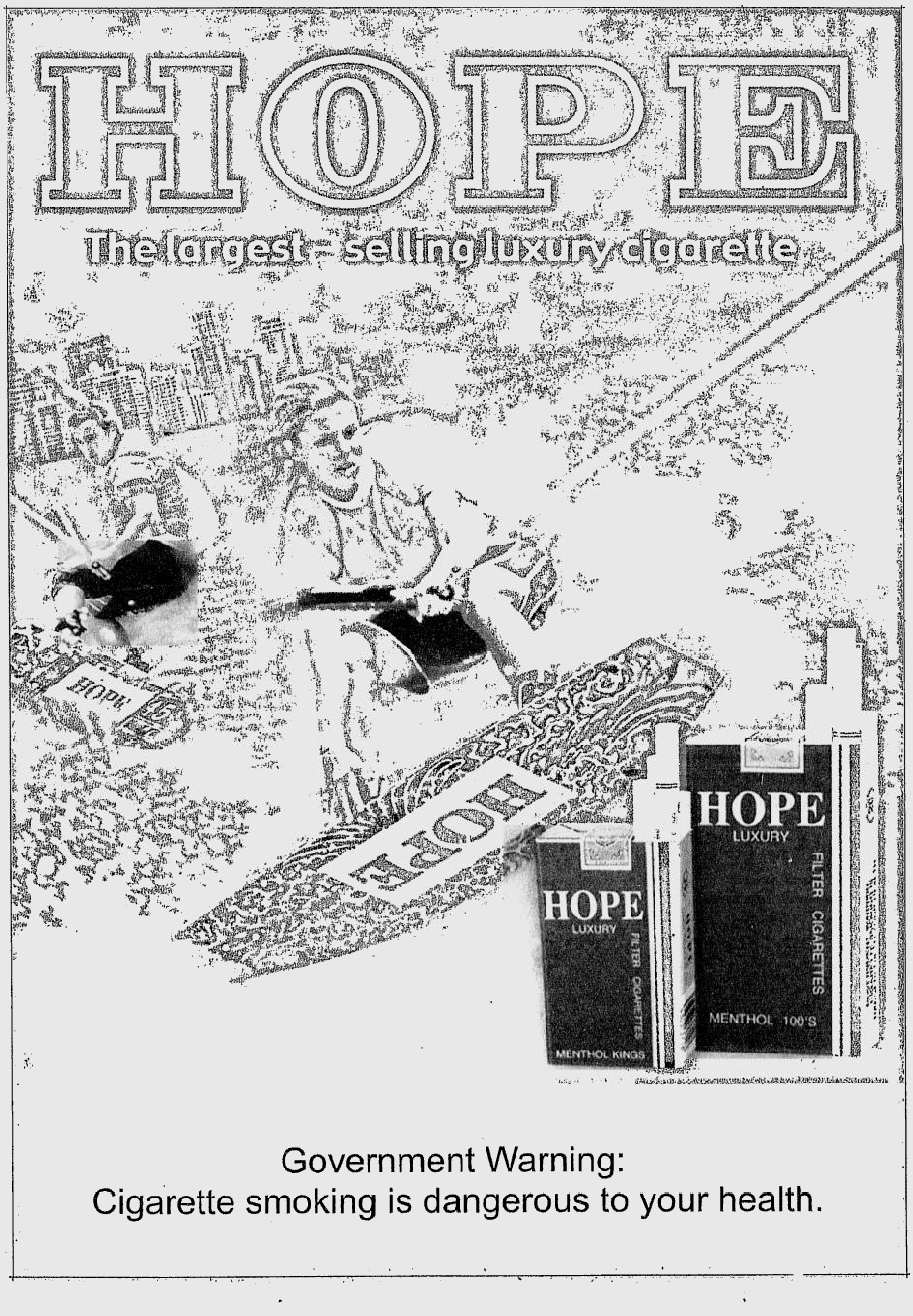
SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

TENNIS: US Open 2003; 11 p.m.; Star Sports—The fourth grand slam event of the year blasts off from Flushing Meadows in New York. Defending champion Andre Agassi and 2003 French Open runner-up Kim Clijsters are the top seeds.

BASKETBALL: Tournament of the Americas—Canada vs Mexico; 11 a.m. (r-10:30 p.m.); Puerto Rico vs Argentina, 8:30 p.m.; IBC 13 and Solar Sports—The race for Athens heats up as the elimination round winds down in Puerto Rico.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.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SPORTSWATCH

PBA imports Sports Forum guests

IMPORTS playing in the PBA Third Conference and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza take centerstage in Tuesday's edition of the PSA Sports Forum at the Manila Pavilion. The imports will appear during the second part of the weekly session sponsored by Red Bull, Agfa Color and Pagcor while Atienza takes the floor in the first half along with Darts Council of the Philippines official Andrew Araneta and Tourism Undersecretary Arman Arreza. The public service program starts at 10:30 a.m.

Sisos turn netfest into family affair

ILOILO—Bernardine and Sally Mae Siso turned the unisex 10-under division into a family affair by scoring lopsided semifinal victories in the 2003 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop Saturday at the Iloilo Provincial Sports Complex hardcourts. Bernardine ousted Ralph Sobrevega, 6-1, 6-0, and younger sister Sally Mae routed Carlo Ledesma, 6-1, 6-1, to arrange the title showdown. In the boys' 14-under bracket, Gerard Ngo set up a semifinal showdown with recent Adidas age-group tormentor Marvin Serito, who whipped Mark Balce 6-1, 6-2. The lower half pits James Canete, a 6-4, 6-2 winner over Larry Antigua, against El Santo Santos, who won against John Sobrevega, 6-3, 6-2. Other finalists in the Milo netfest organized by the Children's Tennis Workshop, supported by Wilson balls, Adidas and Sports Kids and sanctioned by Philta are Ralph Barte and Santos in the boys' 16-under; Barte and Janjie Soquino in the boys' 18-under; Martina Guba and Sally Mae Siso in the girls' 12-under; Guba and Jin Querubin in the girls' 14-under; Querubin and Lean Baoy in the girls' 16-under, and Alyssa Labay and Riza Mariano in the girls' 18-under division.

RP IX to slug it out in Bangkok tilt

A YOUNG and talented Philippine junior baseball team slugs out against tough Asian opposition in the 5th BFA AAA Baseball Championship in Bangkok, Thailand from Aug. 28 to Sept. 5. The Filipinos, who are bracketed with the Indonesians, Sri Lankans and host Thais, are undergoing hectic training assisted by national coaches and senior players at the Rizal Memorial Baseball Stadium. The junior sluggers, whose ages range from 16-18, are optimistic of finishing strongly in the biennial tournament. They were selected by the Philippine Amateur Baseball Association from teams in Tanauan City, Makati, Bacolod, Iloilo and Angeles City.

Acosta grabs lead in chessfest

RAMIL Acosta grabbed the lead in the Classic section of the Philippine Executive Active Chess Express (Peace) going into the sixth leg on August 30 at the Land Bank Plaza in Malate, Manila. Acosta's fifth leg victory last July 26 boosted his total to 78 points, dislodging erstwhile leader Richard Villaseran, who slid into a two-way tie for second with Rey Reyes with 64 points each. The rest of the top 10 in the Classic section are Rolando Gangozo (62), Raul Villate (58), Christopher Castellano (53), Adler Enriquez (45), Orlando Pascual (43), Jericho Bragado (40), and Abraham Dalagan, James Infiesto and Juan Rojano (36).

Media, Triple V golfers clash

GOLFERS of Media and Triple V renew their rivalry tomorrow with the holding of the second Tito Eduque Memorial Cup golf tournament at the Aguinaldo Golf Club. The annual 18-hole dual meet between Media golfers and Triple V's Kamayan Golf Club is actually the 19th edition of what used to be called the Triple V-Media Golf Classic. It was renamed the Tito Eduque Memorial last year in honor of the late former national basketball coach and chair of the Triple V Group of Restaurants. Eduque, who died in November 2001, would have turned 76 on the day of the tournament. A total of eighty players from both clubs are expected to participate in the event, won last year by Media golfers. Tee-off time is 6:30 a.m. with the award ceremonies scheduled at Dads Restaurant at Megamall. Under the traditional format of the dual meet, Media and Kamayan will use their respective handicaps with the net scores of the top 10 players in each club counting towards the team score. Each club will also have its own individual competitions.

Stagfighting season starts at LPC

THE 2003 stagfighting season formally starts today as well-known gamefowl breeders test the mettle of their new battlecrosses in Las Piñas Cockpit's Annual 6-Stag Derby. Action starts at 6 p.m. with Pagcor Casino Filipino and Lakpue Drug Inc. as sponsors. Proceeds of this fund-raising affair will be donated to several projects of Las Piñas City Mayor Nene Aguilar. At stake is a cash prize of P1 million, with three refrigerators going to the champions as bonus. The entry fee is P15,000. Early favorites are the entries of Sen. Ramon Revilla, Bong Revilla, Gov. Ito Yñares, hotelier Biboy Enriquez, Gerry Ramos, Louie Cua, Roger del Rosario, Cito Zamesa, Johnny Elorde, lawyer Romero Yu and Danny Ty, Lito Orillaza, Vive Mayor Nestor Mercado and Rudy Salud, Cito Manansala, Rolly Ligon, Eric de la Rosa, among others. The championship round will be held on Wednesday, August 27. For inquiries call 873-1040.

Showdown 7 draws 90 entries

A BIG field of participants are expected to compete in the Ray Showdown 7-Stag National Derby slated Sept. 2 and 4 at the Roligon Mega Cockpit. At stake is P1 million, and the entry fee is P18,000. "Based on the strong and positive feedback from breeders all over the country, this derby will draw more than 90 entries. We have been conducting daily farm-to-farm screening since August 7," said hosts Danny Ty and Romero Yu. Those who wish to join may bring their stags at Roligon this Saturday and Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For details call 833-2275 or 833-1638. on Sept. 16, 18 and 20, promoter Rolly Ligon will present the Stag Festival 5-Stag Derby with a guaranteed prize of P1.2 million.

Two big Pasay derbies up

TWO big stag derbies are lined-up on Thursday and Saturday and on Sept. 5 at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit. The annual Richard L. Bates 7-Stag National Derby will be held starting Thursday with more than 60 entries seeing action. Entry fee is P15,000. Submission of weights is on Wednesday only, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Interested parties may call 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750. The derby starts at 4 p.m. On Sept. 5, another 5-stag event, to be hosted by pit manager Eric dela Rosa, will stake a cash prize of P400,000, with entry fee pegged at P15,000. Backing these events are sponsors Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Free and Sagupaan B-50 Forten.

San Beda booters post 3rd win

DAN Padernal scored two second half goals to lift San Beda College past University of Santo Tomas, 2-1, last Friday in the Ang Liga Football Cup at the UST pitch. Padernal received a long ball from defender Japet Sablon and blew by two Growling Tiger defenders to beat UST keeper Kim Versales in a dramatic 90th minute strike that handed pacesetting San Beda its third straight win. UST, mentored by Nonnoy Carpio, took an early 3rd minute lead with a goal from a deflection off the SBC defensive wall. SBC coaches Aris Caslib and Ryan de la Cruz made break-time adjustments and Padernal equalized on the 53rd minute. An elbow, a shove and a thrown punch in the 60th minute turned the match into a near-brawl. It was put off by the referee and UST security. As a result, San Beda defender Ace Intrepido and Growling Tiger striker Aljo Clarino were red carded.

Nomads booters rebuilding

THE NOMADS Football Club is going global. Determined to win the Globe Super Cup in October, the Nomads intend to rebuild the team with French, Japanese and British reinforcements. The French Football Club and Manila All-Japan FC have purchased corporate membership at the Nomads Sports Club, thereby giving them the privilege to register their players as regular members of the club. "The objective is to put together an expatriate team capable of beating Armed Forces teams and Kaya FC in the 5th Globe Super Cup," said Nomads coach Andy Yates. The Nomads wound up fourth in the Samsung-United Football League and runner-up in the second division of the recent Lupoy-GNC Cup.

Youth soccer website launched

PARENTS who wish their kids to get into the world's No.1 sport will do good to check out this football web page for more information: www.pyso.org.ph. Among those involved in the project are Armand del Rosario, Freddy Gonzalez, Maxi Abad and Anton del Rosario.

Lucky escape gives Clarke 1-shot edge

Woods, Love just 3 behind

AKRON, Ohio—Northern Ireland's Darren Clarke pulled off a miraculous par save to allow him to grab the lead in the six million dollar NEC Invitational here on Saturday.

It helped the burly Ulsterman shoot a four-under 66 and move to nine-under for the tournament and one ahead of America's Jonathan Kaye, who carded a third round five-under 65.

A further shot back was joint second round leader Chris Riley. Three shots back lurk Tiger Woods and Davis Love.

Clarke, sitting at eight-under and tied for the lead with Kaye, looked to be heading for a certain bogey at the monster 667-yard, par-five 16 when he hit his drive into one of the giant fairway bunkers.

Only able to blast the ball out, he was then forced to lay up short of the pond guarding the green. When his fourth shot went over the green and nestled in the fringe, Clarke was staring at a six.

But, using a metal wood as a putter, he somehow managed to save par.

Even Clarke was surprised by his lucky escape, his face breaking into a broad smile.

When he birdied the par-four 17th for the outright lead the smile broadened.

It was a dramatic change from Friday's second round when Clarke dropped two shots over the closing four holes. On Saturday he was one-under.

"My short game bailed me out a few times," said Clarke in the understatement of the day.

Looking ahead to Sunday Clarke admitted it would be a battle.

"The course is playing tough. You can see from the scoring. It's a fantastic leaderboard. I want to go out and play like I did today, but with a few less bad shots," said Clarke.

Woods, who has almost made this tournament his own, winning three of the previous four, shot a three-under 67 to put himself in line to make it four out of five.

Although he was still having problems with some erratic driving, Woods managed to scramble a sub par round.

"I got off to a great start then all of a sudden I lost it and made three bogeys but I got it right back again," said Woods.

Love, who along with Woods is battling for the Player of the Year award, had a two-under 68 to join Woods at six-under.

David Toms, who had shared the second round lead with Riley, found himself struggling coming home and ended with a mind numbing 76 to drop him back to one-under for the championship.

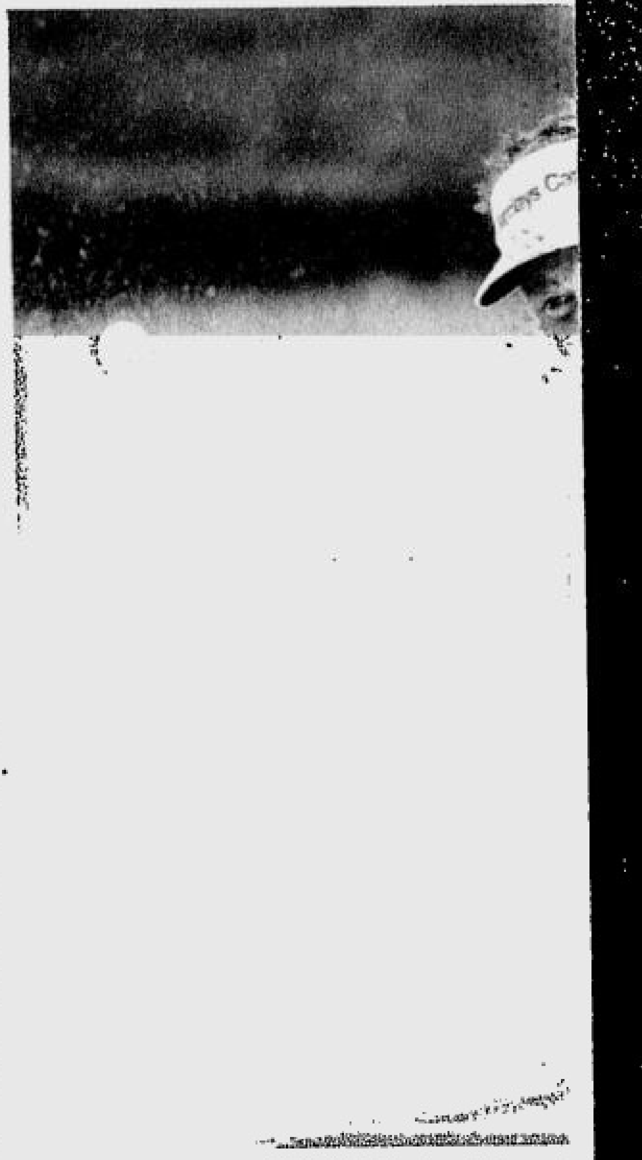
It was heartbreak day for world number two Ernie Els.

Playing with Woods, the big South African came out firing and was three-under after only two holes when he began birdie eagle but it was all downhill and bogeys after that.

A disappointed Els found himself signing for a one-over 71 and two-under for the championship.

Scotland's Colin Montgomerie finally had something to smile about when he shot a level par 70 to be two-under and only seven behind his Ryder Cup teammate.

"I'm the same now from the leader as I started the day. At least I haven't lost any ground. I'll be trying my best to get it going tomorrow," said Montgomerie. *AFP*



CLARKE blasts out of the bunker on the 10th on the

Curtis walks of

AKRON, Ohio—His final putt as a bachelor dropped for par. Then, Ben Curtis left the 18th green Saturday to a serenade rarely heard in the midst of a $6 million World Golf Championship.

"Going to the chapel and I'm, going to get married," the gallery sang.

And that's about the time the nerves began to set in.

"I'm glad to be done," Curtis said after 2-over 72 in the NEC Invitational, leaving him in the middle of the pack. "I'm getting a little nervous now that it's over."

Curtis had already set the Saturday evening wedding date to Candace Beat-

CURTIS

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Comonong, Cahig rule Caraga race

BUTUAN CITY—Jonard Comonong and Mary Jane Cahig yesterday ruled the Caraga regional elimination leg of the 27th National Milo Marathon here.

Comonong, a veteran of many Milo runs, bagged his first leg title by finishing the 20-km race in one hour 11 minutes and 42 seconds.

"*Lagi akong sumasali rito* (Milo Marathon) *pero ngayon lang ako nanalo* (I'm a regular in regional races here but this is my first win," said the 29-year-old Comonong, whose best finish in a regional race was third.

Placing second was Raul Lopez (1:13:07) and with Alson Ceralvo third (1:13:14).

Cahig, a first-timer in the event, surprised everyone by clocking one hour, 39 minutes and 51 seconds to rule the women's division.

"When I learned about the event, I decided to give it a try," said the 23-year-old Cahig in Cebuano. "But I have to train hard for the 42-K because I haven't ran that distance."

Maricel Orosco (1:49:54) and Marelyn Bernos placed second and third, respectively in this popular race held in partnership with Cebu Pacific, Adidas, Bayview Park Hotel, Department of Tourism and Powerbar.

The top three runners in both divisions qualified for the national finals scheduled on Oct. 19 in Manila.

Comonong actually crossed the finish line third overall but James Torres (1:10:38) and Pedro Pujas (1:10:48) were disqualified because they are not residents of the Caraga region. Torres and Pujas are from region 10 and should have ran in the Cagayan de Oro leg two weeks ago.

Merlita Arias was also disqualified in the women's division because she is from Cebu.

Jaffrey Quipao (14.54) topped the men's 5-K fun run followed by Lloyd Alo (14:38) and John Paul Mahinay (14:54). The top three in the women's side were Luzviminda Matildo (19:31), Jenvie Sardino (19:42) and Marietcho Tansay (21:52).

The kiddies age-group 3-K run was won by Mariel Habay and Rhona Ann Requerme (6-9) and Al-Kene Salise and Mary Pilar Ramonal.

Butuan City mayor Daisy Plaza did not only fire the starting gun for the 20-K run but she also competed in the 5-K event and then helped hand the trophies to the winners with Milo Regional Sales Manager for North Mindanao Trina Abola.

2003 JVC Open badminton gets under way today

SLAMBANG action is expected when the 2003 JVC Open Badminton championships unwrap today at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati.

Internationalists Kennevic and Kennie Asuncion head the entries in the elite categories of the weeklong event to be ushered in by matches in the senior division.

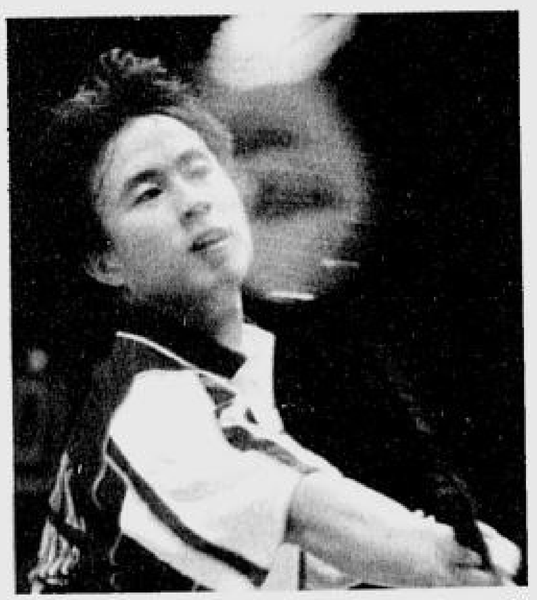
Action in the junior, corporate and celebrity groups are also on tap.

Over 500 players registered for the championships, forcing the organizing IMG (International Management Group) to hold an extra three-day qualifying series.

Former First Lady and PBA (Philippine Badminton Association) president Ming Ramos, PBA vice president Gen. Edgar Aglipay, JVC Philippines general manager Kazue Salud, lawyer Faustino Salud and the Asuncions will grace the opening ceremonies at 11:30 a.m.

The premier elite section for men and women offers P15,000 to the winner, with the doubles champion receiving P20,000.

Hostilities in the two groups start Thursday.



KENNEVIC Asuncion in action during the world championships in England in July. AP

A one-day celebrity tournament, set Aug. 31, will cap the championships, with the cast of the GMA Artist Center—Biboy Ramirez, Brad Turvey, sherwin Ordonez, CJ Ramos, Iza Calzado, Tricia Roman, Dianne Delfin and Liza Dino—playing in an exhibition game.

A special exhibition match pitting two ace Indonesian players against a couple of top local players will also be held as part of the JVC championships.

Vengeful Eagles claw Tamaraws

From page A25

17 and 15 points each for the Eagles, who also got some awesome plays from shocktroopers Doug Kramer, Macky Escalona and Intal.

Even Jonathan Uichico, son of San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico, was fielded in for the first time and nailed a jumpshot shortly before the final buzzer sounded.

Banal was coaching Talk 'N Text in the PBA when Ateneo dropped its first game of the season against University of the East. The Eagles lost again in their second game, this time to the Tams with Banal at the helm, but Ateneo has been untouchable since then.

Earlier, Mark Abadia scored 17 points and Ramil Tagupa added 11 as the Adamson Falcons dumped the National University Bulldogs, 85 67, for their fifth victory in as many outings. The Bulldogs dropped to 1-9.

It was the first time the Falcons registered five wins in a season since they entered the 1992 UAAP Finals behind now PBA stars Marlou Aquino and EJ Feihl.

In the last 10 years, only once did the Falcons win at least four games and this came during the time of Shell's Eddie Laure in 1996.

SCORES:

First Game (Srs)

ADAMSON 85—Abadia 17, Tagupan 11, Cabahug 10 Hato 8, Tajonera 7, Poloyapor 7, Bono 6, Gandarosa 5, Alonzo 5, Catabay 4, Kong 3, Tiongco 3.

NU 67—Cajayon 18, Baguion 17, Mendoza 14, Miclat 8 Tolentino 6, Catamora 3, Mollena 1, Malcontento 0 Malagueno 0, Balijon 0, Moradas 0.

Quarters: 21-22, 40-31, 62-42, 85-67

Second Game (Srs)

ATENEO 87—Alvarez 18, Gonzales 17, Fonacier 15, Tenorio 12, Bugia 10, Intal 7, Kramer 2, Membrero 2, Escalona 2 Uichico 2.

FEU 63—Jones 15, Sinco 11, Santos 9, Sierra 7, Isip 6 Miranda 6, Rizada 6, Catli 3, Zablan 0, Yabut 0.

Quarters: 17-15, 35-36, 52-all, 87-63

Arcilla tops Subic netfest

SUBIC—Top seed Johnny Arcilla spoiled Patrick John Tierro's bid for a first-ever title with a 6-1, 6-4 victory in the final yesterday of the Cebuana Lhuillier Tennis Circuit 2 at the Subic Bay International Tennis Center indoor court.

Arcilla needed only 21 minutes to win the first set against the 16th ranked Tierro, but had to summon all his edge in experience in top-level play in the second set after the 6-foot-1 Tierro, who plays out of the Subic Bay area, clawed back from a 5-2 hole to threaten at 5-4.

Arcilla, who won the first leg of this series at the Manila Polo Club last June, received the champion's trophy and P30,000 cash prize from Cebuana Lhuillier executive vice president and general manager Jean Henri Lhuillier and Philippine Tennis Association president Col. Salvador Andrada.

On his way to his first-ever final in three tournaments this year, the 18-year-old Tierro knocked out No. 2 Joseph Victorino, No. 4 Rolando Ruel Jr. and No. 10 Pop Sabandon.

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vay to a four-under-par 66 in the third round. REUTERS

f the green to say 'I do'

AP

ty before he threw a wrench in the plans by winning the British Open as a 500-1 long shot, the first player in 90 years to win a major in his first try.

That made him eligible for the itational—played in his home- o less—and Curtis and his fi- reed the show should go on. hows, that is.

are only three World Golf Championships a year.

Weddings are even rarer.

It's not uncommon for a groom to play golf the day of his wedding, but not in a tournament with Tiger Woods and Ernie Els, and not with 30,000 people lining the fairways.

The wedding was scheduled for 5 p.m., but the bride and groom decided to push it back by an hour, which was a good thing—Curtis didn't finish until 3:20 p.m.

He already was late for the Friday night rehearsal, thanks to a career-best 64 in the opening round that gave him a late afternoon tee time. *AFP*

Near-perfect Paradorn powers on

LONG ISLAND—Top seed and defending champion Paradorn Srichaphan of Thailand cruised into the final of the TD Waterhouse Cup on Saturday, needing just 57 minutes to dispose of Germany's Nicolas Kiefer 6-0, 6-2.

Paradorn dominated his opponent with superior shot-making ability as he moved on to Sunday's final against American James Blake, who crushed seventh seed Younes El Aynaoui of Morocco 6-3, 6-1.

Blake didn't take much longer than Paradorn—winning his match in just 59 minutes—as both players appear to be well rested and confident heading into the final of the last warm-up event for the US Open.

PARADORN

"Every ball that I hit today went exactly where I wanted," Paradorn said.

"I have a significant amount of confidence right now and that comes out on the court." In winning this event a year ago, the Thai picked up his first ATP Tour title and has not lost a set in an impressive defense.

"I feel comfortable here," Paradorn said.

"When I stepped on the court in the first-round it felt right." Kiefer admitted he never got into the match right from the outset.

"I didn't have the best feeling today," Kiefer said.

"Paradorn started quickly today and I was playing catch-up the entire time." Blake won his 10th hardcourt match in 13 outings this year in dominating El Aynaoui, who appeared drained after getting little sleep on Thursday after the birth of his baby son.

It's the first finals appearance this year for Blake, who has defeated Paradorn in all three of their previous meetings. *Reuters*

PILOT PEN

Capriati gets the monkey off her back

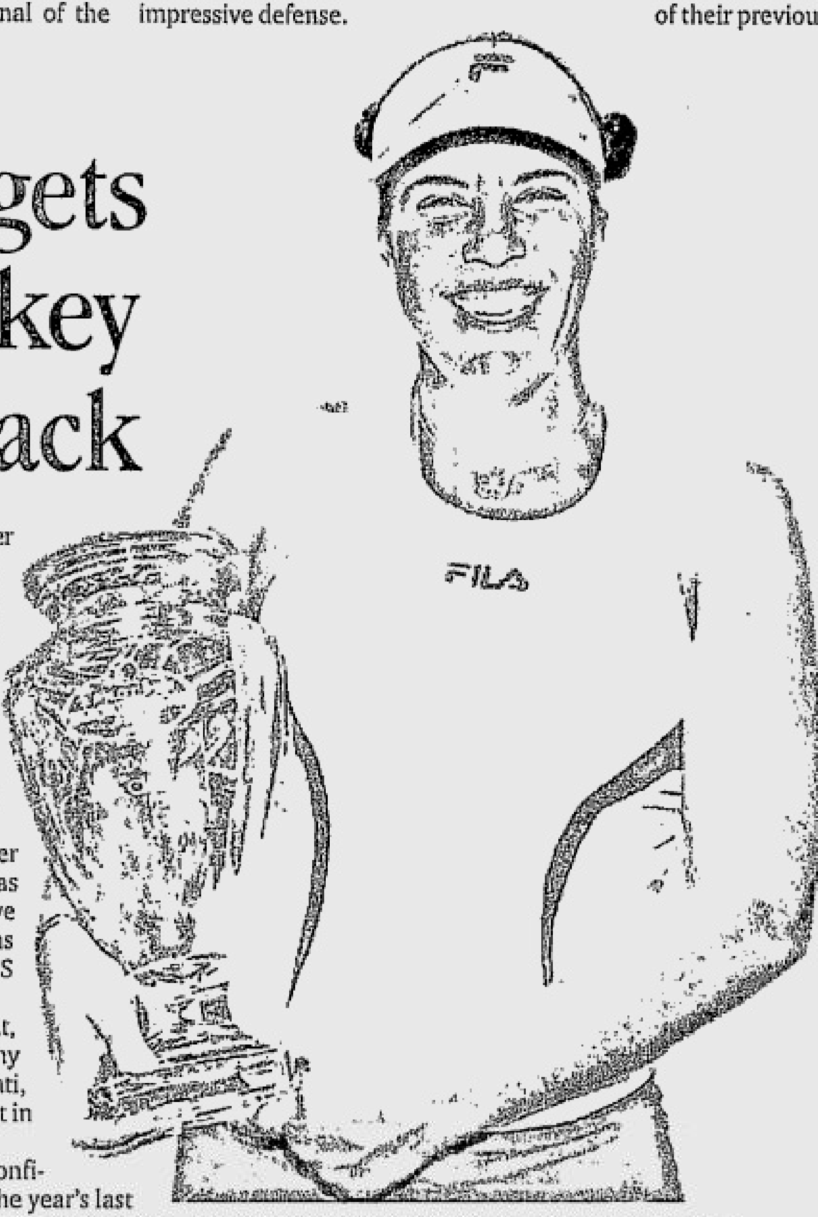
NEW HAVEN, Connecticut—Jennifer Capriati claimed her first title since last year's Australian Open when top seed Lindsay Davenport was forced to retire from the Pilot Pen final on Saturday with a left foot injury.

Davenport, who had been bidding for her first New Haven crown after three final defeats to Venus Williams, was trailing 6-2, 4-0 when she decided to stop.

For most of this season, former world number one Davenport has been troubled by an inflamed nerve between two toes and she now plans to undergo surgery after the US Open, which starts on Monday.

"You don't want to win like that, obviously, but it's a big monkey off my back," said the third-seeded Capriati, who had previously lost to Davenport in nine of their 11 meetings.

Her victory comes as a timely confidence-booster, with the US Open, the year's last grand slam tournament, set to begin at Flushing Meadows in New York on Monday. Capriati has been seeded sixth for the women's singles. Reuters



CAPRIATI lugs her trophy, her first since last year's Australian Open, after defeating Lindsay Davenport in the Pilot Pen final. AFP

La Salle chessers remain on top

Senior division—DLSU 21.0; UP 17.5; Ateneo 16.5; UST 14.5; UE 13.0; FEU 10.5; Adamson 10.0; NU 9.0

Women's division—UP 21.0; DLSU 18.0; UE 15.0; UST 15.0; FEU 7.0; Ateneo 5.0: NU 3.0

DEFENDING champion La Salle edged University of the East, 2.5-1.5, yesterday to remain on top with 21 points after the seventh round of the UAAP chess team championships at the UE campus on C.M. Recto Ave., Manila.

National Master John Paul Gomez and Jayson Salubre provided the full points for La Salle, demolishing UE's Stephen Manzanero and Leonil Lopez on boards 1 and 4, respectively.

Menard Ocampo scored the only win for UE, shocking former world youth campaigner Jake Banawa on board 2.

In other matchups, Ateneo surprised University of the Philippines, 3-1; Adamson beat UST, 2.5-1.5; and FEU defeated National University, 2.5-1.5.

NM Marlon Bernardino

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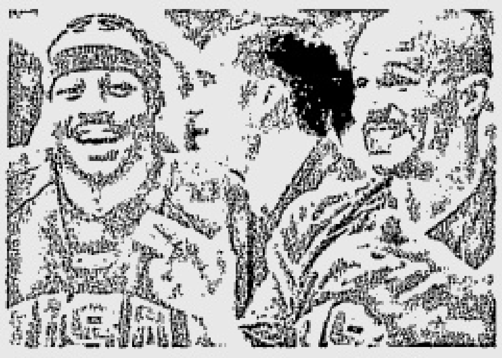
4TH STRAIGHT ROMP

US five slams Virgin Islands

SAN JUAN—Vince Carter and Kenyon Martin led an exhibition of slam dunks as the US thrashed the Virgin Islands 113-55 on Saturday to end their opening round of games at the Fiba Olympic Qualifying tournament with a 4-0 record.



ALLEN Iverson (left) and Jason Kidd share a hearty laugh as they watch the game from the bench. AFP

Missing from the lineup, however, was San Antonio's Tim Duncan, who was born in the Virgin Islands but opted out of playing as he did not feel it was appropriate to compete against the country of his birth.

Duncan is now a naturalized US citizen.

Head coach Larry Brown opted for a shorter starting lineup but height was not a factor as his side put together a 20-0 scoring run in the second quarter for a 60-32 halftime lead on the back of 77-percent shooting.

"Our coaching staff and players have been preaching the team ethic rather than an all-star one," Brown said referring to Duncan's absence.

"Tim Duncan is a special player but we have a lot of special players so we were able to overcome a loss like that." Gone was the sloppiness of Friday's game (a workmanlike win over Venezuela) as Allen Iverson and Jason Kidd fed Carter and Martin repeatedly for dramatic slam dunks, much to the delight of the packed arena.

The Virgin Islands had no answer at either end of the court and the second half descended into a silky-skills contest for nearly every player on the US team.

Iverson went 7-for-9 from the field to lead all scorers with 17 points—including three 3-pointers—in just 18:03 of action.

"I've been hearing a lot of comments about how much he's playing like a team player, defending and sharing the ball," Brown said of Iverson. "I'm proud of the way he's played and his teammates are as well."

Martin, who finished with 14 points and seven rebounds, believes the US is coming together as a team and is looking forward to the second round.

"We had a good four games so far and we look forward to the next four games because we want to prove a point," Martin said. "We're taking this very seriously."

Carter and the little-used Nick Collinson both added 14 points apiece for the US.

Jameel Heywood top-scored with 13 points for the Virgin Islands, who play Venezuela on Sunday to decide which team advances to the next round from Group B.

In the late game, Marcelo Magalhaes scored 20 points to lead Brazil to a 96-87 win over Venezuela.

Brazil and the Dominican Republic—who were idle on Saturday—have identical 2-1 records and are assured of qualification into the second phase.

In Group A action, Canada held on to defeat a stubborn Uruguay 90-84 behind Rowan Barrett's 22 points and solid support from the reserves.

Canada struggled in the first half, shooting just 3-for-14 from the three-point line.

Steve Nash had a rare off day and while leading the transition attack and scored only two points in each half. *Reuters*

Shaq hopes Kobe case won't drag on

LOS ANGELES—Shaquille O'Neal hopes the sexual assault case against Kobe Bryant doesn't drag on.

"It's an unfortunate situation. Kobe's a teammate of mine and a friend of mine," said O'Neal, who previously had been quiet during an extremely eventful summer for the Lakers.

"I'm very confident in the judicial system, so hopefully this will be resolved quickly. And hopefully it will be pain-free on both sides."

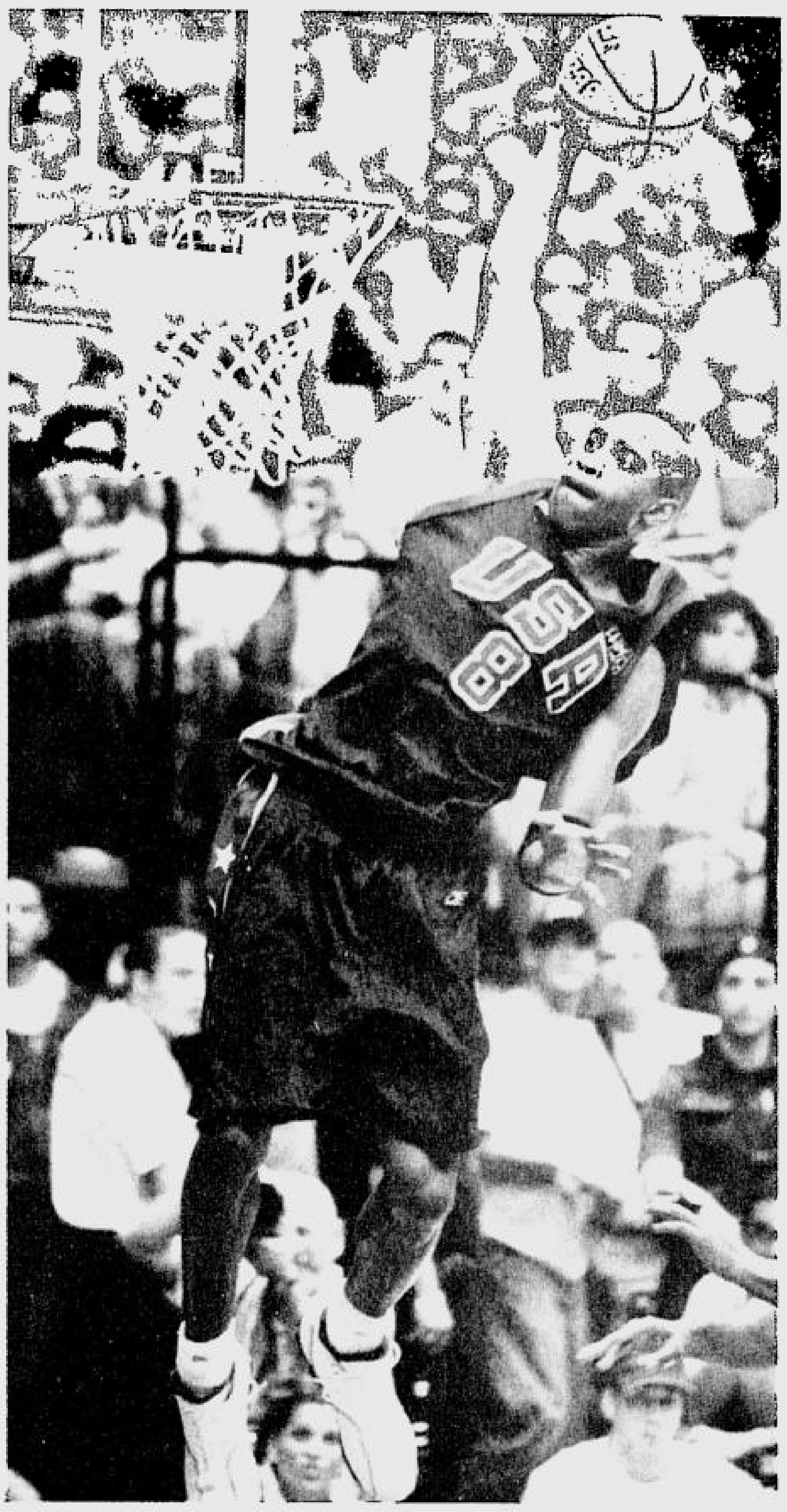
He added, "I've been instructed not to say anything about it."

Bryant is accused of sexual assault at a Colorado resort hotel on June 30.

Bryant, who turned 25 on Saturday, is free on $25,000 bond. He is scheduled to return to Eagle, Colorado, for an Oct. 9 preliminary hearing to determine whether there is enough evidence for a trial.

The Lakers' guard has claimed his 19-year-old accuser had consensual sex with him.

During a break Saturday at a kids basketball camp where he was gleefully working with youngsters, O'Neal did talk enthusiastically about the Lakers' signing of Karl Malone and Gary Payton. *AP*



VINCE Carter soars for a dunk. REUTERS

Duncan sits out game vs homeland

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—Tim Duncan decided not to play Saturday against the US Virgin Islands, where he spent the first 18 years of his life.

Duncan was in uniform but did not start for the US team in its final game of the first round at the Tournament of the Americas. Elton Brand replaced him in the lineup.

Duncan had been struggling with the idea of playing against his homeland.

"It's going to be tough, but it's going to be fun. I know a lot of those guys and it will be fun to be out there on the court with them," Duncan said earlier in the week. "But at the same time, I'm kind of torn about it."

Under international eligibility rules, a player cannot represent a second country after he has competed for a different nation above junior level. In Duncan's case, he became ineligible to represent the Virgin Islands after he played for the United States as a 20-year-old in 1996 on the 22-and-under World Championship qualifying team.

Duncan also represented the United States at the 1994 Goodwill Games, the 1995 World University Games and the 1999 Tournament of the Americas. He was unable to compete in the 2000 Olympics because of an injury.

The US Virgin Islands lost its first two games of the Olympic qualifying tournament to Brazil and the Dominican Republic, but was hoping to have a chance to advance to the second round with a victory Sunday against Venezuela, which was 0-2 going into its game Saturday night against Brazil. *AP*

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Bulgarian, Greek entries named lords of the rings

ANAHEIM, California—Bulgarian Jordan Jovtchev provided a perfect reminder of the beauty of gymnastics on a night when six shared medals at Saturday's world championships program drew a disgruntled response from fans.

JORDAN Jovtchev shows his winning form. REUTERS

Jovtchev, who tore side muscles in a fall on the parallel bars earlier in the week, overcame the pain factor to produce exemplary, gold-medal winning performances on floor and rings.

But in both disciplines he had to be content with sharing the title of world champion with American Paul Hamm who matched him on the floor with 9.762 points and Greek Dimosthenis Tampakos who was awarded an identical score of 9.787 on the rings.

Those tied golds were augmented by four other shared medals on the first night of individual apparatus finals at the Arrowhead Pond.

China's Teng Haibin and Japan's Takehiro Kashima both won gold on the pommel horse, while Italian duo Matteo Morandi and Andrea Coppolino looked forward to toasting success together after they were each awarded a bronze on the rings.

In the women's section, 28-year-old Uzbekistani Oksana Chusovitina defied the aging process to secure an outright gold in the vault.

However, behind her the judges failed to separate Russian Olympic champion Elena Zamolodchikova and North Korea's Kang Yun Mi as they both took silver.

On the asymmetric bars, Americans Chellsie Memmel and Hollie Vise secured a golden double for the home country with identical scores after two of their main rivals—Irina Yarotska of the Ukraine and Chinese Fan Ye—made errors. *Reuters*

Giants make it 5 straight

SAN FRANCISCO—Neifi Perez doubled home Yorvit Torrealba with the go-ahead run in the eighth inning as the San Francisco Giants won their fifth straight with a patchwork lineup, beating the Florida Marlins 3-2 Saturday.

The teams and fans at Pacific Bell Park observed a moment of silence before the game for Bobby Bonds, the former San Francisco star who died of cancer earlier in the day. His son, Barry, will be away from the Giants indefinitely.

"As soon as we got here and we knew that Barry Bonds' father died, it was sad," Perez said. "But we're professionals. We have to play the game, and we're glad we won the game for him."

Jeffrey Hammonds homered for the Giants, who also rested regulars Rich Aurilia, Benito Santiago and Marquis Grissom. But after a strong start from Dustin Hermanson and outstanding relief by Jim Brower (8-4), San Francisco got its sixth straight home victory—and its 21st in the last 24 games for the NL West leaders.

The Marlins lost their fifth straight.

Josh Beckett (6-7) struck out six during seven strong innings for Florida.

"(Beckett) had pitched a good game, but I had to have a strike," manager Jack McKeon said of his decision. "I went with our experienced guy, and he got it . . . Of course, then the little guy hit one probably further than he'd hit one all season." *AP*

'Schumi' qualifies 8th in Hungaroring

BUDAPEST, Hungary—Since taking over the lead in the Formula One drivers' championship, Michael Schumacher has been finding it difficult to win a race or even qualify well.

He qualified just eighth for the Hungarian Grand Prix while Renault's Fernando Alonso earned the pole position Saturday.

Sunday's race on the changed Hungaroring track will be the third in a row in which Schumacher, the five-time world champion, will not line up among the top three. He hasn't won a Formula One race since the Canadian GP in June, when he went into first place in the standings. *Reuters*

Harp, Locsin set to play again

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

DAVONN Harp and Noli Locsin may soon play again in the Philippine Basketball Association and, in all likelihood, in the PBA Reinforced Conference which starts on Saturday, Aug. 30, at the Easter College in Baguio City with Red Bull Barako clashing against Federal Express in the lone opening match.

Sacked by PBA Commissioner Noli Eala for drug abuse last May 14, Harp, Red Bull's defensive gem, and the battle-tested Locsin, now donning the jersey of Talk 'N Text, are set to be reinstated in the pro league because they have complied with all the requirements, including passing with flying colors several random drug and alcohol tests.

"We are glad that Harp and Locsin have met all the requirements leading to their reinstatement," said Jessie Villanueva, basketball division chief of the Games and Amusement Board. "And, as far as we are concerned, there will be no problem with the restoration of their licenses."

Harp and Locsin are former Red Bull teammates, but between the two, Harp, 26, is the more dominant player. The 6-foot-7 Harp is the team's undisputed board leader who made it possible for the Photokina franchise of sportsman-businessman George Chua to win back-to-back PBA Commissioner's Cup championships in 2001 and 2002.

"He is a tireless player who plays good, clean basketball," said team manager Tony Chua. With Harp back in the league, fans know they are getting total commitment from him. He moves fast and rebounds well. And although his outside shooting—especially from the free throw area—needs improvement, he is a scoring machine from under. Harp has the God-given gifts of height, heft and good anticipation.

His suspension last May left a big gap in Red Bull's middle slot, which was a major reason why it lost in the last two PBA conferences. Now that he's back along with Jimwell Torion, who was reinstated earlier after having been suspended also for drug abuse, expect coach Yeng Guiao's Red Bull Barako to make a bigger impact in this year's Reinforced Conference where one import standing below 6-5 is allowed per team.

On Saturday, Red Bull Barako will be parading 6-foot-3 Ramel Lloyd, a European League player against FedEx import Darrin Hancock, a four-year veteran of the NBA who played for the Charlotte Hornets and the Milwaukee Bucks. Lloyd is a product of Long Beach University in California, while Hancock is from Kansas U.

***

GMA STOPS CASINO IN BORACAY. Heeding the popular clamor to stop any form of gambling in the country, President Macapagal-Arroyo recently disapproved a project of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. to open a casino at Club Panoly in Boracay. I salute the President for her timely and wise decision to stop the Pagcor casino operation in that island resort. Gambling is not only addictive, it also undermines the moral fiber of the people.

Rev. Fr. Isauro David of the Holy Rosary Parish, the lone parish in Boracay, said the junking of the casino was "really good news for us who have been praying and working hard against the project."

Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon had backed the idea of opening a casino in Boracay exclusively for tourists. But concerned residents of the island resort opposed the idea, saying the casino will only tarnish Boracay's image as a family tourist destination and that it could very well turn the resort into a gambling island where tourists would come only to gamble and not to enjoy its world-famous white sand beaches.

Thousands of residents, including some grade school children and high school students, had likewise petitioned Malacañang and Congress to "keep Boracay casino-free."

Last Oct. 25, the Aklan provincial government passed a resolution signed by majority of its members opposing the casino while many members of the Boracay Foundation Inc. composed of owners of resorts, restaurants, bars and sports shops on the island, also opposed the Pagcor project.

In these difficult times, people need jobs, not gambling. Gambling is senseless and there is nothing to learn from it.

***

For inquiries, call telefax (044) 933-1214. My e-mail address: manolo-inigo@yahoo.com.

SPORTS noodle

From page A27

ANSWERS
1. False (It was Talk 'N Text that was fined)
2. John Horsfall (Canada)
3. Andre Agassi (USA)
4. Michigan (Kalamazoo City)
5. Larry Brown
6. 276 (4-under)
7. Dennis Camañero

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3) Customers must fill out all details necessary in the raffle coupon (name, address, telephone number, signature affixed, dealer name, vehicle purchased, date of purchase).
4) Raffle coupons will be dropped in designated drop boxes, located at all Nissan Dealers.
5) The name that appears on the winning raffle coupon shall be declared the winner.
6) Cut-off date for dropping of entries will be close of office hours on September 05, 2003.
7) All coupons will be gathered by NMPI representatives and placed in a major tambiolo to be witnessed by a DTI representative.
8) A draw supervised by a DTI representative will be held on September 10, 2003 (2:00 PM) at the NMPI Technopark in Sta. Rosa Laguna.
9) One winner will be drawn to win a trip for two (2) to the Tokyo Motor Show in Japan and a tour to Tokyo Disney Sea. Package Includes: Airfare for two (2); Hotel accommodation for four (4) days and three (3) nights; Pocket money (US $400); Two (2) tickets to Tokyo Motor Show; Two (2) tickets to Disney Sea; Half-day Tokyo City Tour.
10) Winner will be notified by registered mail and via phone.
11) NMPI will shoulder all taxes for the trip and the 20% prize tax. All other documentation required for the trip will be for the account of the winner.
12) The winner's name will be published in a newspaper of general circulation 10 days after the raffle. The trip will be held tentatively from October 24 to 28, 2003. The prize is transferable but not convertible to cash.
13) If the prize remains unclaimed for a period of 6 months from the date of notification, it will be forfeited in favor of NMPI, with the concurrence of the DTI.
14) If a winner wasn't able to process his documents within the scheduled date of the trip, he is still entitled to avail of the prize minus the tickets to the Tokyo Motor Show, provided it is still within the 6 month period from the date of claim.
15) All decisions pertaining to the raffle promo made by NMPI with DTI concurrence shall be deemed final and non-appealable.
16) Promotional deals are not valid with other corporate, dealer, fleet, and other special deals.
17) NMPI employees, its dealers, advertising agencies, and their relatives are excluded from this promotion
18) The trip prize can be claimed at NMPI Technopark, Sta. Rosa, Laguna upon presentation of two (2) valid IDs and the registered mail.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3388, series of 2003

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Favorite Girl fairest of 'em all in Lakambini race

By Edwin Villanueva

STAR jockey Fernando Raquel Jr. laid a big trap which doomed Speed Machine and steered Favorite Girl to victory yesterday in the Lakambini Stakes at the Santa Ana Park.

Not known for her early speed, Favorite Girl was hustled into the lead by Raquel when the gates opened, surprising the huge Sunday crowd who had expected the horse to come off the pace.

But Raquel eased up on his mount approaching the first bend and gave way to the favored Speed Machine, while settling just within striking range.

Speed Machine, handled by John Cordero, opened a four-length gap at the backside before Raquel roused Favorite Girl anew for the final cruncher even as Galapagos tried to join the chase.

Nearing the home turn, Favorite Girl was like a house on fire as she stormed past Galapagos and narrowed Speed Machine's lead.

Sustaining her charge, Favorite Girl whizzed by the tiring Speed Machine at the home turn and kicked away to a four-length victory in the 1,800-meter race among six fillies.

Speed Machine held on to nip Tatler Cover (Jeffril Zarate) by a head for second spot. Successful Dream (Val Dilema) came in fourth followed by Galapagos (Virgilio Camanero Jr.) and Strong Lady (Jeffrey Bacaycay).

"*Diniskartehan ko lang na iuna muna para maka*-save ground *at buti nagresponde naman* (I decided to send her to the early lead to save ground and it's good she responded well)," said Raquel, Favorite Girl's regular pilot.

Favorite Girl, sired by former champion import Thunder Vic out of Catherina Beatriz, notched her seventh win in 11 runs and won P450,000 for the Floirendo Stable.

The Cojuangco Cup runner-up covered the seldom-used distance in 1:54.6 (14-23-26-24.5-27).

Earlier, Johnny Saulog sparkled as he skippered Windlass to victory in the Invitational race for Class B jockeys.

MOST WANTED

JOCKEY Pat Day raises his whip as he brings Ten Most Wanted across the finish line. AP

Ten Most Wanted tops $1-M Travers

SARATOGA SPRINGS, New York—They ran the Travers Stakes without Funny Cide and Empire Maker, and everyone showed up at Saratoga Race Course anyway.

With a record crowd of 66,122 cheering the stretch run on a perfect sunny Saturday, Ten Most Wanted surged past fading Peace Rules and cruised to a 4 1/2-length victory in the $1-million Travers.

"I didn't think he would win that easily," winning trainer Wally Dollase said. "The other horses were getting tired out there probably, and that's what made my horse look good."

It's been a long time coming as Ten Most Wanted finally put together a big race for Dollase and his group of 11 owners, including J. Paul Reddam, who has a 25-percent share.

The 3-year-old bay colt was a disappointing ninth behind New York-bred Funny Cide in the Kentucky Derby, then finished three-quarters of a length behind Empire Maker in the Belmont Stakes. He seemed to have a win in the Swaps Stakes at Hollywood Park in his last start, but was passed by During and lost by a head.

This time, there was no mistake. With Funny Cide and Empire Maker back in their stalls with health woes, their highly anticipated match postponed, the race set up perfectly for Ten Most Wanted.

Peace Rules was trainer Bobby Frankel's pinch runner for Empire Maker, and along with Strong Hope, the two front-runners set a torrid pace, running the first three-quarters of a mile in 1:09.98—the second fastest for a Travers.

As the six-horse field rounded the final turn, jockey Pat Day patiently moved Ten Most Wanted into contention, pulling even with Peace Rules in the upper stretch before pulling away.

"He put it all together today," Dollase said. "I couldn't believe how the race set up for us."

Peace Rules, with Jerry Bailey aboard, finished second, 10 lengths ahead of Strong Hope. Wild and Wicked was fourth, followed by Congrats and Sky Mesa.

Ten Most Wanted, who went off as the third betting choice at odds of 2.75-1, returned $7.50, $3.40 and $2.90. Peace Rules, the slight favorite at 2.30-1, paid $3.80 and $2.80. Strong Hope, ridden by John Velazquez, paid $3.10 to show as the colt lost for the first time in his last six starts. Sky Mesa was the second choice at 2.50-1.

Winning time for 1 1/4 miles was 2:02.14.

Not only was the attendance a record, so was the on-track and total handles. On track, $9,390,933.67 was wagered; total handle was $39,489,785.98. *AP*

MJC hosts another 6-day racing program

THE MANILA Jockey Club Inc. (MJCI) will host another six days of racing starting this Tuesday (Aug. 26) at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite.

MJCI's six-day racing schedule for the third straight week includes four evening cards of nine races each from Tuesday through Friday and two weekend programs of 13 races each on Saturday and Sunday.

The weeklong program starts MJCI's two-week racing calendar which will run through the first racing week of September.

"We would like to invite all racing aficionados to witness and patronize our exciting program of horse races for the next two weeks at the SLLP," said MJCI president and chief executive Alfonso R. Reyno Jr.

Three highlight events will banner this week's program races at the SLLP, which will be dubbed as the 2nd "Alay sa Kawal" Racing Festival.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Afghan runner makes milestone; Belarus, Ethiopia bets prevail

SAINT-DENIS, France—The World Championships opened Saturday with a milestone for Afghanistan, a gold medal for a shot putter just back from a doping ban, and sparkling performances in the heptathlon and women's 100-meter heats.

Three titles were decided on the first day of the nine-day championships at the Stade de France outside Paris, with Andrei Mikhnevich of Belarus winning the men's shot, Ethiopia's Berhane Adhere the women's 10,000 m and Ecuador's Jefferson Perez the 20-kilometer walk.

Sweden's Carolina Kluft set personal bests in each of the first four events of the heptathlon and closed in on a possible European record, while sprinters Kelli White, Chandra Sturrup and Gail Devers set the stage for a 100-m showdown.

Perhaps the most inspiring performance of the day came from Lima Azimi, who became the first woman from Afghanistan to compete at a world championships.

Azimi wore long, baggy pants and used running spikes for the first time. Officials spent several minutes showing her how to use the starting blocks as she lined up for the 100 heats.

ADHERE celebrates after crossing the line. AP

Azimi finished about 40 m behind the field in a "personal best" time of 18.37 seconds—more than seven seconds behind White.

Under the former Taliban regime, women were banned from competing in sports.

"This was important for my country, for me, my family," Azimi, 22, said. "It's the first time that girls of Afghanistan participate in such a world championship. But it is my participation that is important, not my result."

White, the US champion bidding for a 100-200 double, ran the fastest time in the second-round heats later Saturday, clocking 10.95 seconds. Sturrup, the Bahamian world leader this season, won her first two heats in 11.08 and 10.98.

Ukraine's Zhanna Block, the defending champion who has struggled this season after injuries, won her opening rounds in 11.13 and 11.08.

Devers, competing in the dash 10 years after she won the world 100 title, advanced by finishing second in her heats in 11.17 and 11.31.

French sprinter Christine Arron confirmed her contender status with times of 11.15 and 11.08.

"Anybody can win this race, but I put my money on me," Sturrup said.

White said she hopes to run a career best 10.70 in Sunday's final two rounds.

Mikhnevich, who returned from a two-year doping ban early this month, was the surprise winner of the shot put and the first non-American to take the title in 10 years. *AP*

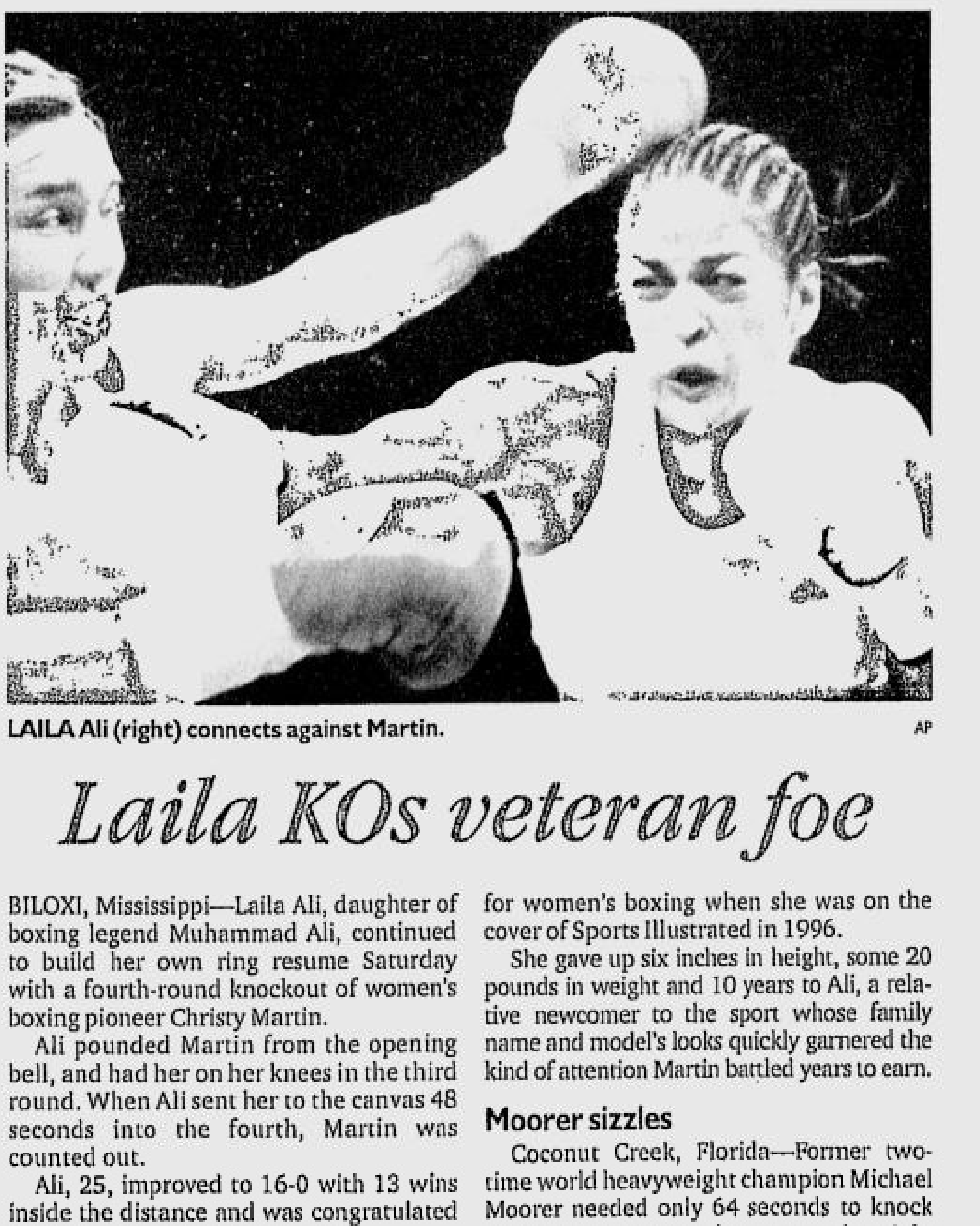
St. Francis, Aguinaldo dribblers triumph

GAMES TODAY (*Tanduay Gym*)
10:30 a.m.—EAC vs La Salle-Dasma
12 noon—St. Francis vs PSBA

THE ST. FRANCIS of Assisi College Doves and Emilio Aguinaldo College Generals hurdled their respective rivals at the start of the Universities and College Athletic Association (UCAA) men's basketball tournament yesterday at the Blue Eagle gym.

The Doves, playing without national team members Ervin Sotto and Ranidel de Ocampo, downed La-Salle Dasmariñas, 69-61, while EAC subdued Olivares College, 75-61.

Niño Songco scattered six free throws for EAC in a 15-3 blast that enabled them to cut loose from OC.



LAILA Ali (right) connects against Martin. AP

Laila KOs veteran foe

BILOXI, Mississippi—Laila Ali, daughter of boxing legend Muhammad Ali, continued to build her own ring resume Saturday with a fourth-round knockout of women's boxing pioneer Christy Martin.

Ali pounded Martin from the opening bell, and had her on her knees in the third round. When Ali sent her to the canvas 48 seconds into the fourth, Martin was counted out.

Ali, 25, improved to 16-0 with 13 wins inside the distance and was congratulated in the ring by her famous father.

Martin, 35, fell to 45-3-2, with 30 wins inside the distance.

The background of the two fighters saw the bout billed as the biggest to date in women's boxing.

Martin is a veteran of 14 years in the ring, who became a reluctant ambassador for women's boxing when she was on the cover of Sports Illustrated in 1996.

She gave up six inches in height, some 20 pounds in weight and 10 years to Ali, a relative newcomer to the sport whose family name and model's looks quickly garnered the kind of attention Martin battled years to earn.

Moorer sizzles

Coconut Creek, Florida—Former two-time world heavyweight champion Michael Moorer needed only 64 seconds to knock out Brazil's Rogerio Lobo on Saturday night at the Seminole Casino. Lobo came out as the aggressor, charging directly at Moorer and throwing wild, wide punches that Moorer had no trouble eluding. But the last time Lobo rushed him, Moorer fired a straight right hand that landed squarely on Lobo's chin. *AFP, AP*

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BSP keeps tight watch on forex traders

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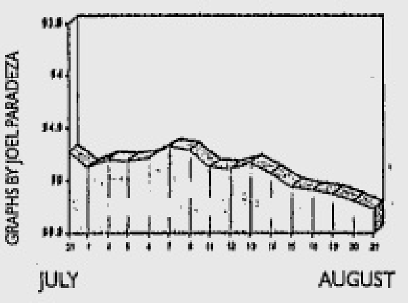


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 55.265 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Aug. 21, 2003

¥ 117.84 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Aug. 22, 2003

GOLD: $360.90-361.30

per ounce Hong Kong, Aug. 22, 2003

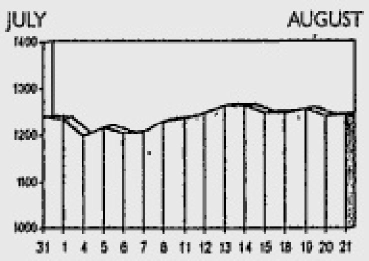
STOCK MARKET

Sluggish trading seen

TRADING in the local stock market is seen to remain sluggish this week amid escalating political tension ahead of the presidential elections next year and the weakening of the peso.

The main-share Philippine Stock Exchange Composite Index declined by 2.72 points from its

SLUGGISH/ B6



(See stock market report on Page B6)

By Clarissa S. Batino

AS the peso sustained its losing streak last week, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is keeping a tight watch on the foreign exchange market to quell any possible speculation arising from the operations of the so-called Binondo Central Bank.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said they have fielded examiners to do on-the-spot audit of banks and foreign exchange dealers in key financial districts, particularly in Chinatown.

The Binondo Central Bank is an informal term to describe a loose group of banks and money-changers operating in Chinatown believed to have dictated the foreign exchange rates in the crisis years of the 1980s.

While the operations of the Binondo Central Bank were muted following the liberalization of foreign exchange transactions in the early 1990s, the BSP was concerned that the informal group was being revived during times of peso volatility.

The peso dropped to a new record closing low of 55.265 to $1 last Thursday and although traders said the local currency was already trading expensively at this point, the weakness would persist until stability on the political front had been restored.

The resignation of Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo and four of his five deputies last Friday was seen to add more pressure on the financial market this week.

Although Malacañang rejected the courtesy resignations, investors would interpret this as another indication that all was not well in the bureaucracy.

Reyes said the policy-making Monetary Board of the BSP had instructed the examiners to scrutinize the dollar transactions of each bank and even money-changer.

"We have fielded our bank examiners for closer monitoring of banks' forex transactions with tight watch on suspicious activities. Each transaction will be looked into to check whether they are fully documented and if there was no double-counting," the deputy governor said.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. confirmed that there had been such an instruction although he stressed the central bank was not singling out the banks in Chinatown.

"The Monetary Board is always concerned when the peso is weak. It had been discussed in previous meetings to intensify the audit of banks," Tetangco said.

Reyes said the examiners were asked to give "special attention" to the foreign exchange operations of banks with branches in the Chinatown area.

"Violators or erring banks will face stiff penalties," Reyes warned.

The central bank imposes a maximum fine of P30,000 for each violation a day but had asked Congress to increase the penalty tenfold as part of the amendments to the BSP charter.

The peso continued to lose ground last week following accusations of money laundering against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, aggravated by rumors of another coup attempt.

Uncertainties caused by the suspension of the central bank governor had remained one of the biggest drags on the market, according to traders.

"The market has not priced in the rumors of another coup. What the market is more worried about at this point are uncertainties on the fate of the central bank governor and political posturing," said Wick Veloso, deputy treasurer of HSBC.

Another military uprising against the Macapagal administration is seen to pull down the exchange rate by a peso.

At Thursday's close, the local currency was only 48 centavos shy of its all-time trading low of P55.75 to $1 posted the same day a military-backed popular revolt ousted President Estrada in 2001.

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Epira implementation pushed

FORMER Speaker of the House Arnulfo P. Fuentebella warned of an impending Argentina-like economic crisis unless the government would have enough political will to implement the reforms outlined in the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) or RA No. 9136.

"The fact that government today is spending beyond its means in ways that are unsustainable is frightening and could lead us towards a crisis very similar to that of Argentina," Fuentebella said during the National Conference on Risks and Opportunities of Power Deregulation.

He said that the deficit of P210 billion, about 5.3 percent of the gross domestic products, was even bigger than that of Argentina's 3-4 percent of GDP.

Fuentebella, principal author of Epira, said that when Congress was working on the power bill, it was very clear that National Power Corp. (Napocor) had to be privatized since it was a major contributor to the budget deficit.

Unfortunately, he said, Napocor remained the biggest contributor to the consolidated public sector deficit (CPSD), accounting for about 50 percent of the combined deficits of government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), as Department of Finance (DOF) figures showed.

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Television neat work

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

GLORIAETTA is leaving Mike Arroyo. I mean, according to news reports, she is not going to help him in the "Jose Pidal" (a.k.a. Joe "P") scandal.

Alright, let's assume that people believe everything they read in the newspapers and see on television, meaning, that the reports do not misquote Gloriaetta.

The next obvious question is, do people still believe what Gloriaetta is saying when it comes to her marriage.

After all the grand publicity about how "sweet" a couple they are, despite their ages, all of a sudden, to the public, her marriage doesn't really look that…well, "happy."

* * *

LET'S not even consider that, in her statement of "no" support for Mike, Gloriaetta even forgets to say that other government officials will also abandon Mike. The PNP, for one!

Actually, her statement of "no" support has a qualifier. Gloriaetta says, in the Joe "P" affair, the Palace will not help Mike in a court case. There, it has to be a court case.

And so we wonder if any of the Department of Justice, the Ombudsman, or the Anti Money Laundering Council, even tries to look into the scandal with one blind eye.

In my barangay, we are actually hoping that Gloriaetta investigates the Joe "P" accounts and, if money is being laundered, she confiscates them in our favor.

* * *

ON the day Sen. Panfilo Lacson detonated the Joe "P" explosives on the Senate floor, all news outfits treated the scandal as the big main central focal top story.

That is, all news outfits, both print and electronic, except the government-controlled television stations and, of all networks, the second biggest GMA.

(It's Channel 7 on public television, in case you are confused, and on cable, it depends on what cable company you are using.)

The biggest network ABS-CBN bannered the scandal, while GMA did a neat work out of the Joe "P" scandal, by placing it towards the end, somewhere before the segment about what movie actor is impregnating what actress.

* * *

ANYWAY, I'm sure that GMA had a good to reason to do what we, in the news racket, contemptuously refer to as "burying" the story on the Joe "P" accounts.

I am sure that it had nothing to do with the tantrum of Gloriaetta against a GMA reporter who was accused of "abetting rebellion" by doing her job too well.

Neither does it have anything to do with the "dinner party" hosted by Gloriaetta for reporters, including that very same GMA reporter.

GMA also did not bury the Joe "P" story because the network has the same acronym as Gloriaetta's. The explanation I heard was, it was pure coincidence.

* * *

FOR such is the competition that we, the viewing public, enjoy in the television network business today. It is not much.

Virtually, we have only two networks, namely, ABS-CBN, which is the biggest, and GMA, the second.

Three others (Channels 4, 9, and 13) are controlled by whoever is in power. ABC (Channel 5) only pretends to be in business. It is losing to competition by default.

ABS-CBN and GMA only pretend to be killing each other, but all they actually do, by way of competition, is to copy each other.

Just take a look at the programming of both ABS-CBN and GMA. They're the same. They're like twins. Or we actually have only one network. Only, we are seeing double.

* * *

WHATEVER, competition in the television business is not that stiff. Something in the economic growth can explain it. We have a consumer-driven growth.

Thus, business spends a fortune to lure the consumer's peso. Television ad revenues go up beyond ABS-CBN's and GMA's wildest fantasy, *este*, expectation.

We must add to the business ad revenues, well, the political campaign ads which masquerade as social engineering ads.

Alright, the television ads of Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon do not have any shade, hint, or tinge of politics in them.

But just listen to the AFP ads. They say something about Gloria's generosity, about how she raised the soldiers' pay and gave them benefits.

I've got news for you. It is not her money she is using. It is our money. Her political handlers just spend it to build up her chances for 2004.

* * *

BUT let's go back to television ad revenues. For the past seven months, GMA reported ad revenues of P718 million. That's a big jump of about six times.

Its executives of course take note that GMA posted the more significant growth compared to its "competitor" ABS-CBN.

Okay, recent news reports, featuring the raging word war between the two networks, gave us a lot of technical mumbo-jumbo.

What they are actually saying is, they are both doing well, getting the ad revenues, but GMA is eating into the ad pie which ABS-CBN used to monopolize.

* * *

IT does not sound good for the Lopez group, to which ABS-CBN remains as the only jewel. Of course the Lopez group is still nursing a big financial headache.

Other Lopez companies are either buried in debts or under some, well, "disciplinary action" from this cute administration of Gloriaetta.

At one time, Eugenio Lopez III (or Gabby), who chairs the network, even said that the Lopez firm Bayantel would soon sign a debt restructuring agreement.

It did not happen. A few days after, in fact, its debtors took over the company. They formed a receivership. Maybe that's what Gabby meant by "restructuring."

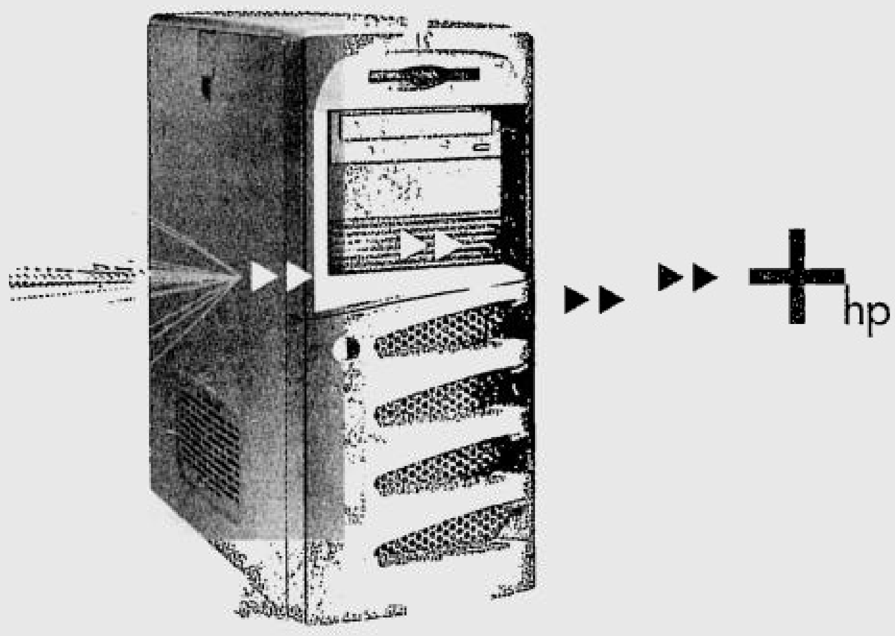
* * *

WITH television ad revenues moving up, somebody must have figured out there is still room for a third competitive network.

That somebody is Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco, chair of PLDT, who reportedly bought ABC (Channel 5 on public television, and "x" on cable).

Tonyboy's latest bombshell of a business

BREAKTIME/ B8



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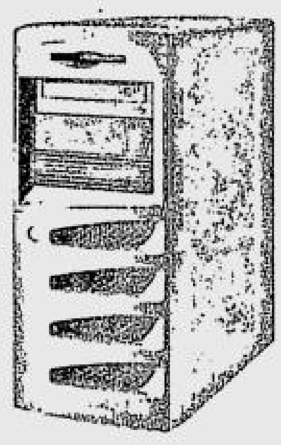

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Bitter row

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

HEALTH Secretary Manuel Dayrit has caved in to the pharmaceutical lobby and ordered the fast-growing ampalaya (amargoso or balsam apple) pill and tea industry to stop promoting ampalaya as a diabetic cure.

"As a result of our representation, the Bureau of Food and Drugs conducted inquiries on the medical claims made by entities marketing ampalaya-based products," Leo Wassmer Jr., CEO of the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines, wrote to industry members earlier this month.

"Since results of studies do not support establishing ampalaya as a 'truly beneficial and even as adjunctive treatment to diabetes mellitus,' Health Secretary Dayrit advised all concerned to 'cease, desist and discontinue any endorsement of ampalaya as an alternative treatment of diabetes mellitus'," Wassmer added.

With no less than pop singer Gary Valenciano and Channel 7 newscaster Mike Enriquez endorsing the ampalaya pills, the herbal industry has seen sales zooming from zilch in 1999 to about P500 million a year in 2002.

Ampalaya's meteoric rise—there are now 15 brands of ampalaya food supplements as against one launched in late 1999—has so alarmed the multinational drug industry that even its allies in the medical profession have also weighed in.

"We do not consider ampalaya to be part of the standard care of diabetic patients and therefore do not recommend its use," declared presidents Elizabeth Paz-Pacheco (Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism Inc.), Rosa Allyn Sy (Philippine Diabetes Association), Ricardo Fernando (Institute for Studies on Diabetes Foundation Inc.), and Augusto Litonjua (Philippine Center for Diabetes Education Foundation Inc.).

"Neither is ampalaya recommended for the prevention of diabetes among healthy individuals."

The public statement of the doctors drew an immediate retort from the pro-ampalaya Association of Municipal Health Officers of the Philippines.

Association president Guia Abad countered that the ampalaya regimen coupled with medication, exercise, and proper diet have shown improvements in the blood sugar levels of diabetics.

Because of the Dayrit order, the health department has now reversed the 1995 ruling of then Secretary Hilarion Ramiro that classified ampalaya, lagundi, tsaang-gubat, sambong and other plants as generic medical substitutes to imported and higher-priced medicines.

COCKTALES/ B4

Gov't sees sale of 8 power plants by April '04

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE POWER Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) said it expected to sell successfully at least eight of National Power Corp.'s electricity-generating facilities between November 2003 and April 2004.

PSALM vice president Froilan Tampinco said the agency started in May preparatory work for the sale of the power plants.

Tampinco said that based on a general timeline on the sale of the generators, PSALM was already distributing preliminary data on the assets to seek initial feedback from investors.

By October, the actual process of selling the plants would have started.

"As per our schedule, we expect to have released the final sale and purchase agreement, and conducted bidding and awarding of the contract for the 210-megawatt Navotas 1 plant by the following month (November)," the official said.

The three-unit Navotas gas turbine facility is located in the town's fishport complex. Napocor assumed ownership of the generators last January after its contract with the private operator Mirant Philippines expired.

GOV'T B4

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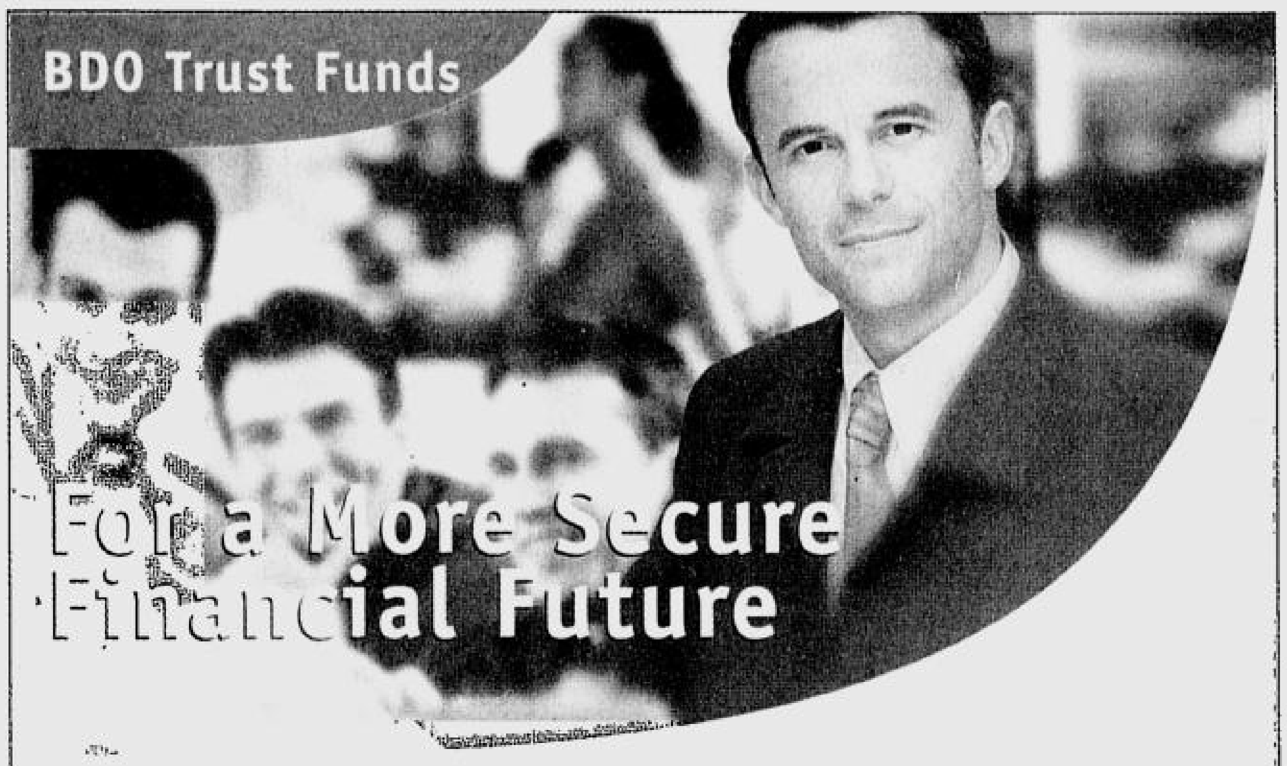

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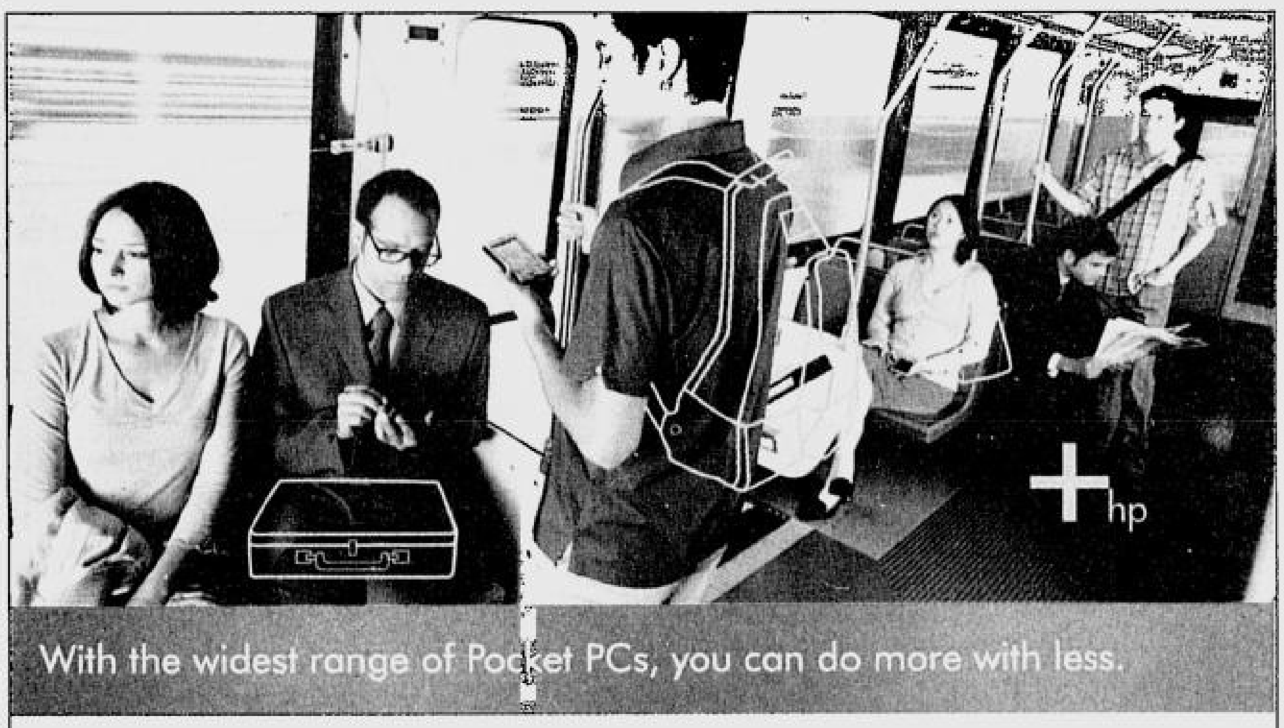

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Fund lack threatens 26 rural projects

By Christine A. Gaylican

RURAL infrastructure projects for 26 municipalities may be derailed if the national government does not provide part of the P1.1-billion supplemental budget for the Department of Agrarian Reform.

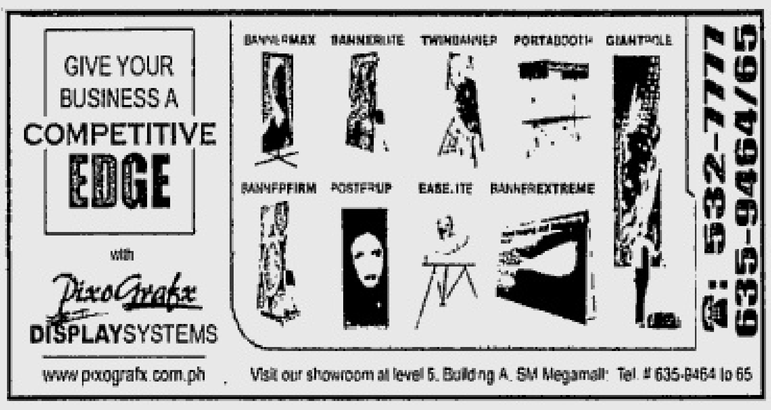
The lack of budgetary counterpart funds for these projects co-financed by the Asian Development Bank may also lead to a partial cancellation of the Agrarian Reform Communities Project (ARCP) loan.

Without the release of the allocation pending before the Department of Budget and Management, infrastructure projects consisting mostly of farm-to-market roads and bridges, irrigation facilities and potable water supply systems for agrarian reform communities in the provinces will be delayed.

"We have an agreement with the ADB that without the national government's counterpart funds, a partial cancellation of the loan will be done so as not to pay penalties," DAR's project manager Herman Z. Ongkiko told the Inquirer Friday.

Ongkiko added that the ADB has expressed its support and for the project as long as both the national government and the LGUs fulfilled their counterpart obligations. The ADB has given the main bulk of the project funds worth P2.8 billion, while the participating LGUs have to shell out P484 million for the ARCP.

The DAR official noted that the ADB also wanted to re-channel some of the funds for other project components such as land titling and survey and microfinance.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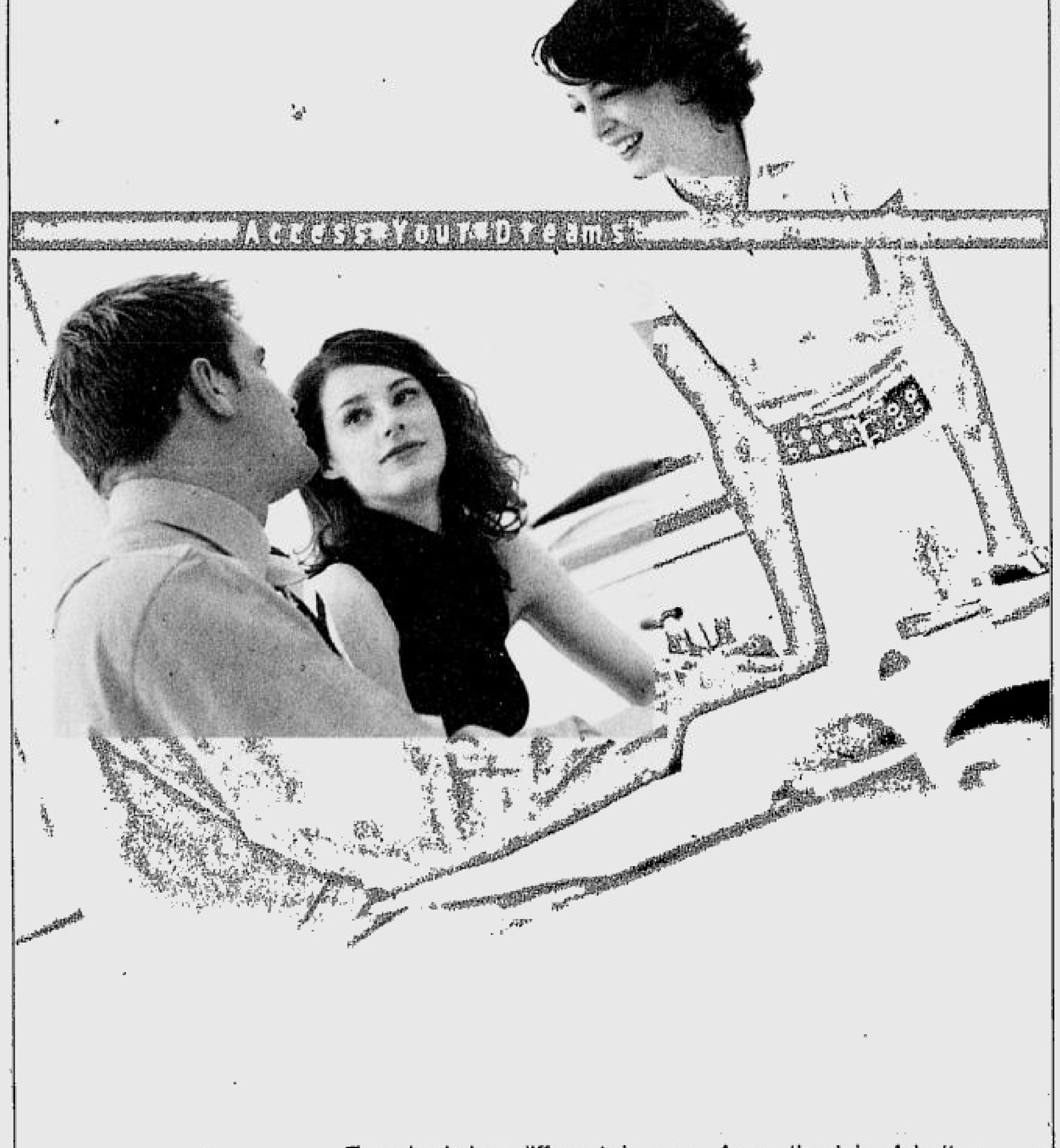
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WTO and the Philippines: Distilling fact from fallacy

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Cielito F. Habito

WITH the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Meeting in Cancun, Mexico, fast approaching, the debate over our country's stance in the world trade body rages again. What I find amusing is that some people actually continue to call for a pullout from the WTO, as if that would be a sensible option for us or for any other small trading country already part of it. This in spite of the way China had exerted great effort to gain membership, along with many other countries who had not been members beforehand. And yet one would have expected China, which appears destined to become the world's largest economy, to be best placed to stay out of it if it chose to. Either these pullout advocates think the Chinese to be incredibly stupid, or they are plain masochists trying to pull all the rest of us down with them.

Did we sell our souls to the devil?

The same WTO-phobics accuse our past WTO negotiators of having recklessly sold our souls to the devil. It saddens me that this line is being mouthed even by certain high-ranking government officials who forget that they were very much part of the government back then, and were themselves in a strong position to shape our WTO negotiating positions at the time. They unfairly claim that the government commitments made in WTO did not benefit from enough consultation, and were simply "dictated" by the big bad guys from Washington. But they conveniently overlook (or have always missed) the fact that what our government committed to WTO then was way, way short of what we were already giving anyway.

In our tariff bindings (i.e. maximum tariff rates we committed not to exceed henceforth), we actually bound our tariff rates at levels way above actual rates already prevailing then. For example, in 1996, our actual tariffs on non-sensitive agricultural products averaged 14.1 percent, whereas the average 1995 base rate bound to the WTO was much higher, at 43 percent. Those tariffs were programmed to decline to an average of 5.6 percent by 2000, and yet we submitted to WTO an average bound tariff for 2004 that was five times as high, at 29.7 percent. The same was true for our tariff bindings on manufactured goods, except they were even more conservative.

The only "easing up" committed to then was to permit minimum imports for 15 previously restricted agricultural products, including rice, meats, and selected crops, at average import tariffs of 38-39 percent, higher than our already mandated highest tariff rate of 30 percent by then. But these "minimum access volumes" (MAVs), as required of all countries under the agreed WTO rules, amounted to a mere 3 percent of total consumption as of 1986-88. For rice, this committed minimum import volume was actually meaningless, inasmuch as we have consistently had to import far more than that due to actual domestic supply shortfalls. And whenever we did import rice (through the National Food Authority), the government waived the tariffs outright anyway, to make rice more easily accessible to low-income consumers. It is therefore a complete fallacy to claim that the WTO opened us up to imported rice to the detriment of the small rice farmers. If we have been importing substantial amounts of rice in recent years, it is because of our own internal failures to increase rice productivity or because of bad weather (especially El Niño)--not because of big, bad WTO.

Production subsidies: theirs and ours

The other contentious issue in the agricultural agreement of WTO pertains to production subsidies. Developing countries are required to reduce trade-distorting domestic support by 13 percent from 1995 to 2004, but no reductions are required if these supports amount to less than 10 percent of value of production. This provision has had no impact on our own agricultural supports, as our input subsidies and price supports for rice (P445 million in the reference years 1986-88) and corn (P39 million) had been well below the 10-percent threshold. On the other hand, developed countries have been generally obliged to reduce their huge agricultural subsidies. Thus, we stand to gain from this particular provision--provided, of course, that developed countries do their part. This is the stickiest point in the current round of WTO negotiations, as it is now well known that the massive supports poured by developed countries on their farm sectors have been the single biggest source of the difficulties of small farmers in poor countries, including ours. A study by prominent international agricultural economists has estimated that a third of all the potential gains from liberalized world trade would be achieved from the removal of developed countries' agricultural subsidies alone.

What should we do in Cancun?

Thus, efforts of small agricultural countries to get the Europeans and Americans to shed their agricultural supports through the forum of WTO must be unrelenting. Our own negotiators must seek every opportunity to gain strength in numbers, by forging alliances and even leading initiatives that would further put the pressure on the big countries to reform their highly distortive agricultural policies. There are potential allies on this cause even within these offending countries, as the policies actually run counter to the greater good of the greater number in those countries. Meanwhile, any further trade concessions we would grant must be tied to tangible reforms and concessions in that direction by our developed country trading partners. We are more likely to achieve such concessions within WTO, and not as a "lone ranger" outside of WTO.

So let's banish the thought of pulling out of the WTO. That would be as foolhardy as the message of that 1970s bumper sticker that read: "Stop the world, I want to get off."

Cocktales . . .

From page B3

From a "scientifically validated herbal medicinal plant," ampalaya has henceforth been reclassified as "folklorically validated herbal medicinal plant."

SARS economics

THE GMA holiday economics plus post-SARS promotions are apparently doing very well for both Philippine Airlines and Cebu Pacific, at least as far as their Hong Kong routes are concerned.

Flights to the Chinese territory were bursting during the three-day Ninoy Aquino weekend. A check with two travel agencies revealed that PAL, Cebu Pacific, and even Cathay Pacific flights are fully booked until the end of the month, with every flight showing a waitlist.

Cebu Pacific has gone back to the two pre-SARS flights a day schedule, offering an eye-popping $85/person air fare plus hotel room on twin sharing, two-nights package to lure back travelers. The fine print is that the hotel, Panda, is located in the New Territories near the Shenzhen border and there is a "compulsory" Shenzhen tour included in the package.

Still, even at the rapidly weakening peso-dollar rate, that $85-package is cheaper than flying to and staying in Boracay or Palawan.

Due to increasing demand, PAL will from Sept. 1 also increase its flights to three times daily and to four on busy days, almost back to the pre-SARS level, said PAL spokesman Rolando Estabillo.

Short takes

- AFTER only one year of posting, our consul general to Hong Kong, Victoria Bataclan, is being reassigned to Europe without having to serve out the usual three-year routine. In contrast to Hong Kong, where the diplomats are daily besieged by labor problems of Filipina domestics, a European assignment is considered a holiday.
- THE CANDIDATES for the new Bayantel receiver, now that Consuelo Manabat has declined her court appointment, include fellow accountants Rosario Bernaldo, Fortunato Cruz and Benjamin Punongbayan. Bernaldo, incidentally, has been appointed by the Securities and Exchange Commission to replace Cruz as receiver for ASB Realty, an appointment Cruz is bitterly contesting in court.

Heard through the grapevine

IN addition to the Asian Wall Street Journal, a sister printing company of the INQUIRER will print the Philippine edition of the International Herald Tribune starting Sept. 15.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

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Gov't...

From page B3

PSALM also expects to have sold to private investors the following:

- the 620-MW combined cycle plant currently operating on diesel and the 225-MW decommissioned oil-fired plant, both in Limay town in Bataan, by January;
- the 22-MW diesel plant operating in Tagbilaran City and the decommissioned 1.2-MW Loboc diesel plant, both in Bohol, by January;
- the 3.5-MW hydroelectric plant in Davao City, which started operations in the late 1950s, by January;
- the 110.8-MW Pinamucan diesel plant (formerly of Enron Philippines) in Batangas that would be relocated to Iloilo by March, and
- the 600-MW Masinloc coal-fired plant in Zambales by April.

Two weeks ago, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said efforts to privatize Napocor's power plants had picked up with two investors considering to buy the Masinloc.

LACK OF INVESTORS IN NEW FACILITIES

Industry exec warns of impending power crisis

By Elena R. Torrijos

ANOTHER power crisis has started to grip the Philippines and the situation could get worse because the increased risk of putting up and operating power plants in the country was turning off investors, according to a senior official of one of the largest local groups in the sector.

Erramon Aboitiz, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., noted that many parts of the Visayas and Mindanao were experiencing tight power supply, if not actual shortages. Publicly listed AEV wholly owns Aboitiz Power Corp., which is being repositioned to shed its distribution and power management businesses in order to be a purely power-generating company.

"We have to start building (power plants) today," Aboitiz said.

However, he pointed out, foreign investors were shying away from the Philippines because of troubles in their own domestic turf and "the risk (of investing here) is too high and with the current price of electricity it is very hard to justify new capacity."

The problem, however, was that what would make it feasible to attract investors would be contrary to the government's policy of privatization and deregulation, he noted.

"For me, I think it's too early for complete privatization and deregulation. We need firm power purchase agreements. That's the only way investors, and therefore capacity, would come in," Aboitiz pointed out.

As a result of the move to privatize and deregulate, it has become unlawful for the state-owned National Power Corp. to enter into PPAs.

In the United States, he added, investors were now staying away from merchant plants or plants that had no power supply contracts and sold directly to the market because it was cheaper to get financing and the cost of capital was lower for plants that had contracts.

₱8.3-B power projects set

By Ronnel W. Domingo

STATE-OWNED National Transmission Corp. (Transco) said it has lined-up some P8.3 billion worth of projects between 2005 and 2008 that were crucial for strengthening the power grid in Luzon.

Transco president Alan T. Ortiz said in an interview the company formally launched two weeks ago the Luzon Island Transmission Augmentation Program or Lista, which consolidated all transmission-related projects in a single effort.

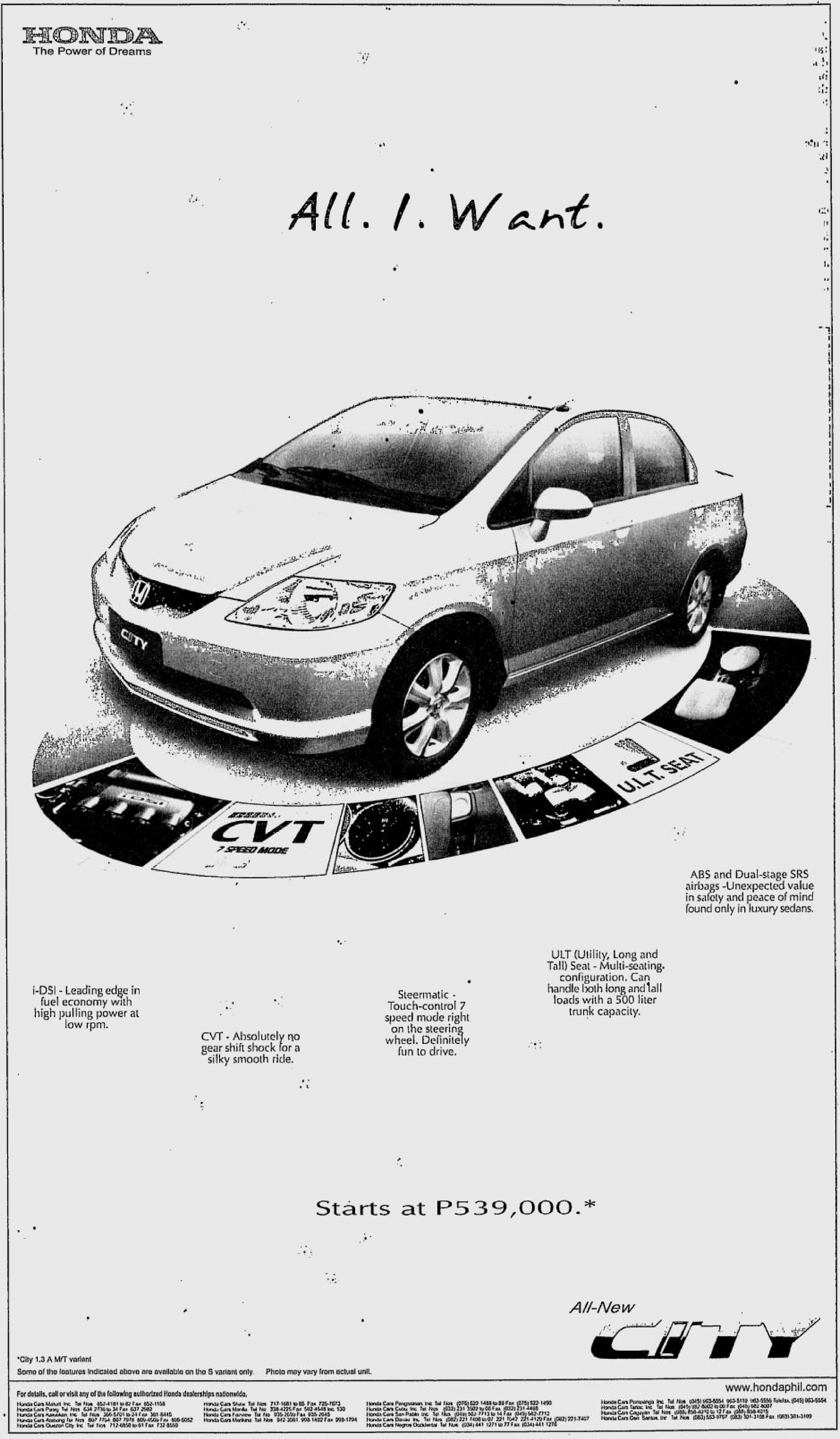
The official said the program aimed to ensure and keep power transmission capability in Luzon reliable and secure so that all those who depend on the industry were served adequately.

Under Project Lista, Transco plans to strengthen the Luzon grid's 500-kilovolt backbone transmission system to make possible the transfer of huge electricity volumes from both the power plants in the north and the south to the major consumption areas.

Substations would be expanded while 230-kV transmission lines would be upgraded.

Project Lista proposes the following:

- the P1.99-billion expansion of the 230-kV Naga (Camarines Sur) and Tayabas (Quezon) substations to 500 kV, set for completion by December 2006;
- the P1.52-billion Luzon-Mindoro interconnection project targeted for completion by December 2007;
- the P1.1-billion, 500-kV Alaminos switching station in Laguna, to ensure delivery of power from the 1,200-MW Ilijan power plant in Batangas and seen completed by June 2006;
- the P1.03-billion Phase 2 upgrade of the transmission network in the Ilocos region, a 120-kilometer extension of the 230-kV system seen completed by June 2006;
- the P975.8-million upgrade of the Binga-San Manuel transmission line that would double the capacity of power transmission in Northern Luzon by October 2006;
- the P577.8-million expansion of substation capacities in Batangas by December 2005 and in Cruz na Daan, Naga, and La Trinidad by December 2006;
- the P577.8-million upgrade of the 230-kV San Manuel-Concepcion-Mexico transmission line using high-capacity conductors, to be finished by September 2006, and
- the P468.8-million installation of 188-circuit-kilometers of 69-kV transmission lines that would enhance substations in the Ilocos, Central Luzon and Bicol regions by December 2006.



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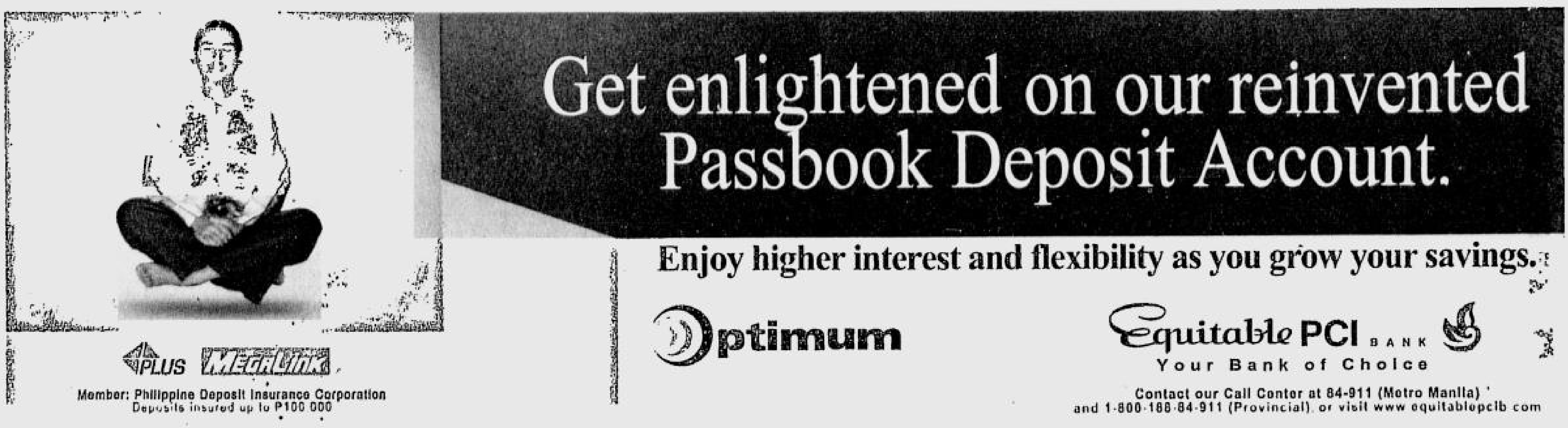

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i-Bank plans IPO in 1st quarter of 2004

By Elena R. Torrijos

INTERNATIONAL Exchange Bank, a small, privately held commercial bank, plans to undertake an initial public offering in the first quarter of next year as part of a capital-build up program to raise P3 billion to P4 billion for its expansion.

At the sidelines of the bank's launching of a new ATM card product at the Elbow Room of The Podium in Ortigas, i-Bank president and chief executive Ramon Sy told reporters last Thursday that the bank was looking to offer about 20 percent of its total equity to the public.

The IPO would also allow holders of 2.5 million in preferred shares worth P250 million to convert these into common shares at the IPO price less 15 percent. The bank has 25 million in outstanding common shares.

I-Bank executive vice president and chief finance officer Antonio Moncupa Jr. said that, aside from an IPO, the bank was also planning to raise additional capital through the issuance of subordinated notes that would qualify as tier-2 capital.

The bank aimed to raise as much as P4 billion in new capital over a three- to five-year period, Moncupa said.

The funds would help i-Bank "position for growth" as they would provide the bank with the financial muscle to make an acquisition of another financial institution or more branches if the opportunity arose, he added.

At present, the bank has 71 branches nationwide. As of end-2002, it had a capital base of P3.88 billion, resources of P38.6 billion, deposits of P31 billion and loans of P18.3 billion.

"We want to have more branches to expand our loan portfolio," Moncupa said. "We think 100 to 120 branches would be a good base."

The bank is projecting that this year it would post P350 million to P450 million in profit, exceeding last year's figure of P352 million. In the first seven months of this year, the bank already posted a profit of P277 million, the bank's original full year target.

In the second half, the bank plans to beef up its reserves by "a few hundred million pesos more" to add to the total of P100 million it provided since the start of the year.

I-Bank is owned by the Vantage group, hotel owner and property developer Ben Tiu, ports magnate Enrique Razon, realty developer Gerard Lanuza and businessman Wilfrido Tecson.

Brokers favor inclusion of PSE units in listing plan

By Doris C. Dumlao

A CONSENSUS has shaped up among broker-stockholders of the Philippine Stock Exchange Inc. to list the local bourse in its entire existing structure—inclusive of its subsidiaries and property assets.

In a recent press briefing, PSE president Ernest Leung said that during the caucuses held among brokers to discuss three listing structure options, the sentiment of the majority was to pursue the listing of the PSE as a mother company, including all of its assets.

"It is more practical to do it all together for the meantime," Leung said.

The PSE has three subsidiaries—Securities Clearing Corporation of the Philippines, Philippine Central Depository and Philippine Stock Exchange Foundation Inc.—and some property assets.

As such, he said the preference was to shelve the two other options. These were:

- to list the exchange but only after properties had been transferred to a new corporation owned by the present shareholders of PSE, or
- to retain the properties and transfer the stock exchange business to a new company initially owned by the current PSE stockholders.

For the last two options that were shelved, the license to operate as a stock exchange would have been transferred to the company that will operate the exchange, which would then be the vehicle used for the listing.

In the future, however, Leung said the PSE might still pursue any of the two remaining options on the structure of the local bourse. The other options were considered to maximize the price valuation of the shares to be listed while minimizing taxation liabilities.

A broker who favored the de-merger with the property and other unprofitable subsidiaries said it would not be smart for the PSE to stick to the same structure once it goes public. "The investor who wants to invest or merge with the PSE in the future would not want to be saddled with idle assets. They don't care about the other things held by the PSE, because return on assets is very low," he said.

Leung also said majority of the brokers favored the listing by way of introduction, or listing without offering of shares to the public.

"Once the shares are attractive enough, then we'll go (for the listing). This is just to be realistic. There are a lot of things to do. We have to get a new system," Leung said.

"We'll make our shares so attractive that there'll be a huge demand," he vowed.

The Securities Regulation Code requires the PSE to go public. While the PSE has done the first step toward demutualization by converting into a stock corporation, 100 percent of its shares are still held by the brokers. The law mandates that the shares held by brokers be diluted as it prohibits any single industry from owning more than 20 percent of the demutualized exchange.

Aboitiz readies expansion in food, transportation sectors

ABOITIZ Equity Ventures Inc., which has long stuck to power and banking as its core businesses, is taking a more aggressive stance on the food and transportation sectors.

AEV president Jon Ramon Aboitiz told reporters that the Cebu-based conglomerate would expand its line-up of core businesses to include transportation and food in a bid to balance its business mix.

"Too much exposure in power and banking may not be prudent," Aboitiz said. "There has to be a balance between the regulated business and the non-regulated businesses."

"If you put all businesses in one basket, they will be down at the same time at some point," Aboitiz said.

Prior to its buyout of other strategic investors in local shipping giant William Gothong & Aboitiz Inc., for instance, AEV considered transportation as a portfolio investment or that which could be unloaded any time.

AEV likewise increased its stake in feed milling and swine producer Fil-Am Foods through the buyout of its foreign partner.

Aboitiz said there was a lot of room within the group's expertise to expand into.

"In food, I don't think we'll put up a hamburger or hotdog joint. We'll expand where we have the competence," he said. "We've been in the food business since the 1960s. We know how to run the business."

"And if we don't know how to run the business, we'll go into joint ventures. We've done that many times and eventually we had the opportunity to buy out the partners."

To date, however, power and banking have continued to be the biggest revenue earners within the conglomerate.

Power holding unit Aboitiz Power Corp. is into distribution (Davao Light & Power Co., Cotabato Light & Power Co., Visayan Electric Co., San Fernando Electric Light and Power Co.), hydro-generation (Philippine HydroPower Corp., Hydro Electric Development Corp., Luzon Hydro Corp., Northern Mini Hydro Corp.), oil-fired generation (Western Mindanao Power Corp., Southern Philippines Power Corp.) and consulting (Aboitiz PowerSolutions Inc.).

Its two banking subsidiaries are Union Bank of the Philippines and City Savings Bank.

Aside from WG&A, its other interests in transportation are AboitizOne, Supercat Fast Ferry Corp. and Aboitiz Jebsen Bulk Transport Corp., while in food, it has stakes in Pilmico Foods Corp., Pilmico-Mauri Foods Corp. and Fil-Am Foods. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Sluggish ...

From page B1

close last Aug. 16, ending the shortened trading week at 1,245.33.

Eagle Equities Inc. president Joseph Roxas said the market was still generally lackluster, but some opportunities for bargain-hunting were emerging now that August, seasonally a lean month, was drawing to an end.

"There can be opportunities to buy selected issues, although trading will still be in small volumes," he said.

Roxas said there might be opportunities to buy Lopez-owned companies such as First Philippine Holdings Corp.

He noted that the market's next support was at 1,200 and resistance at 1,280.

Jonathan Ravelas, chief strategist of Banco de Oro Universal Bank, said investors have remained on the sidelines on concerns over the political landscape.

Chartwise, he said the closing at 1,245.34 last week continued to suggest a bearish movement.

"Further weakness toward the 1,200 level is to be expected in the coming weeks. Immediate support and resistance is seen at 1,230 and 1,280, respectively," Ravelas said. Jose Vistan, an analyst at AB Capital Securities, agreed that sideways trading would persist this week.

"We expect trading to be thin, listless and slow. Buying activities will be limited by political uncertainties and the dearth of market-moving news," Vistan said. Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Aug. 21, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.75	17.75	17.75	17.75	2,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	45.5	45.5	45	45	462,100
Citystate Savings Bank	15.25	15.25	15.25	15.25	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	34	34.5	34	34	266,700
First E-Bank Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	90,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31.5	31.5	31	31.5	14,000
Phil. Savings Bank	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	5,000
Security Bank Corp.	19	19	19	19	91,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	45,200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	10,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1630	1630	1630	1630	50
Pci Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	20,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1185	1190	1185	1190	710
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.25	25	24.25	25	150,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.61	0.63	0.61	0.63	830,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	10,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	625	635	625	630	99,440
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	2,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	900,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	30,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	2,770,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	40,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	535	535	530	530	141,390
Ivantage Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	150,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	56,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	12.5	13.25	12.5	13.25	942,800
Manila Electric Co. B	18.75	20	18.75	19.75	2,292,700
Petron Corp.	1.96	2	1.96	2	1,384,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	1,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.05	3.1	3.05	3.1	8,524,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	450,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	6,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.71	0.75	0.71	0.72	260,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	2.95	3	365,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31	31	31	30,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	427,100
RFM Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	140,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	110,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54	54.5	54	54.5	98,800
San Miguel Corp. B	63	63.5	63	63.5	198,600
Universal Robina Corp.	6	6	6	6	5,000
Vitarich Corp	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	150,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	5,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.41	420,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	10,000
Ayala Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.5	4.55	3,800,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	500,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.6	2.65	2.6	2.65	61,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	2,100,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.0085	63,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	25,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.59	0.64	0.59	0.62	27,690,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	10,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.28	1,330,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	12,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.06	110,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	17.25	18.25	17.25	17.75	2,094,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.115	0.115	1,090,000
Ionics Inc.	1.42	1.44	1.4	1.4	294,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	8,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.78	0.8	0.78	0.8	1,830,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	3,330,000
Music Corp.	0.37	0.4	0.37	0.38	2,160,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	1,000,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	84,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	30,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	4,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	50,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.51	0.51	7,040,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	310,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	20,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	24.75	25.5	24.75	25.5	239,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	600
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	5,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	2,639,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.175	0.18	0.175	0.18	730,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	760,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	150,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1	1	1	1	9,680,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.14	50,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1	1	0.9	0.9	150,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	190,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	270,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5,193,000
MINING					
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0044	0.0046	0.0044	0.0044	35,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0046	0.0046	0.0044	0.0044	54,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	20,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	400,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.3	0.33	0.3	0.32	220,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	14,400,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	3,800,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	100,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,019,660	34,549,150.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	203,393,230	346,353,810.00
PRO	19,812,000	56,800,000.00
Mining	109,620,000	651,200.00
OIL	18,300,000	241,700.00
GRAND TOTALS:	352,144,890	438,595,860.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	451.30	DOWN 1.14
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,787.26	UP 9.86
PRO	542.50	DOWN 3.42
Mining	1,272.14	UP 11.31
OIL	1.42	UNCH 0.00
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	784.49	DOWN 3.12
Composite	1,245.34	UP 2.48

NO. OF ADVANCES: 33; NO. OF DECLINES: 29; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 37; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 99; NO. OF TRADES: 1,958

CURRENCIES

August 21, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.898957	1.000000	55.169000
Japan	Yen	0.007610	0.008465	0.467000
United Kingdom	Pound	1.433747	1.594900	87.989000
Hongkong	Dollar	0.115276	0.128233	7.074500
Switzerland	Franc	0.648131	0.720981	39.775800
Canada	Dollar	0.641562	0.713674	39.372700
Singapore	Dollar	0.516761	0.574845	31.713600
Australia	Dollar	0.594038	0.660808	36.456100
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.384755	2.652801	146.352400
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.239722	0.266667	14.711800
Brunei	Dollar	0.515280	0.573197	31.622700
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000107	0.000119	0.006600
Thailand	Baht	0.021599	0.024027	1.325500
UAE	Dirham	0.244774	0.272287	15.021800
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.112400	61.370000
Argentina	Peso	0.309986	0.344828	19.023800
Brazil	Real	0.299552	0.333222	18.383500
Denmark	Kroner	0.134494	0.149611	8.253900
India	Rupee	0.019662	0.021872	1.206700
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.236599	0.263193	14.520100
Mexico	New Peso	0.083014	0.092345	5.094600
New Zealand	Dollar	0.529671	0.589206	32.505900
Norway	Kroner	0.120734	0.134304	7.409400
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015580	0.017331	0.956100
South Africa	Rand	0.122412	0.136171	7.512400
Korea	Won	0.000765	0.000851	0.046900
Sweden	Kroner	0.108164	0.120322	6.638000
Syria	Pound	0.021404	0.023810	1.313600
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026286	0.029240	1.613100
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000564	0.000627	0.034600

INTEREST RATES

August 21, 2003-MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 21-Aug-03	MART1 20-Aug-03
1 Month	5.8483	5.8625
3 Months	5.8517	5.8714
6 Months	6.395	6.3
1 Year	8.0393	8.0518
2 Years	9.5183	9.5375
3 Years	10.1133	10.1179
4 Years	10.4683	10.4786
5 Years	10.72	10.7286
7 Years	11.4433	11.4446
10 Years	11.7933	11.8571
20 Years	12.1183	12.125
25 Years	12.4125	12.4554

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G & W clubshares
SEC License Broker No. A-17587
As of August 25, 2003

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A	1,350,000	1,200,000
Baguio Country Club	750,000	600,000
Canyon Woods	160,000	100,000
Capitol Hills	-	135,000
Calatagan Golf Club A/B**	70,000/Pls. Call	-
Cebu Country Club	-	1,200,000
Celebrity Sports Club	180,000	150,000
Club Filipino	170,000	130,000
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	260,000/450,000**	240,000
Eastridge	80,000	-
Evercrest	100,000	-
Fontana D/C*/A**	70,000/140,000*/230,000**	-
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	220,000*/250,000**	150,000**
Manila Golf Ind./Corp.*	10,700,000/12,000,000*	11,000,000*
Manila Polo	2,300,000	2,100,000
Makati Sports Club A/B*	Pls. Call	200,000
Manila Yacht Club	550,000	-
Manila Southwoods A/B*	480,000/600,000*	-
Metropolitan Club	100,000	50,000
Mimosa Golf Ind./Corp.*	300,000*	100,000
Mt. Malarayat Ind./Corp.*	250,000	-
Phil. Columbian	70,000	-
Puerto Azul A/B	100,000/150,000*	-
Punta Fuego	-	400,000
Quezon City Sports Club A	-	165,000
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	130,000/165,000*/260,000**	100,000
Rockwell Leisure Club	380,000	-
Royale Tagaytay A/C*	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Sherwoods A/B*/C**	70,000/Pls. Call*	-
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	1,400,000/1,650,000*	-
Subic Bay Yacht Club (Corp.)	150,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	400,000	340,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf & CC	800,000	700,000
Tagaytay Midlands	-	650,000
Valley Golf & CC	300,000	-
Valle Verde (Indv.)	130,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	-	Pls. Call

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CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,175,000	1,350,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,400,000
Baguio Country Club	650,000	700,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"		70,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	80,000
Camp John Hay	200,000	220,000
Canlubang	450,000	500,000
Canyonwoods	100,000	150,000
Capitol Hills	160,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,200,000	1,700,000
Celebrity Sports Club	165,000	200,000
Club Filipino	Please Call	175,000
Evercrest "A"		80,000
Forest Hills "A"		Please Call
Forest Hills "B"		160,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	220,000	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	11,000,000	12,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	10,100,000	10,600,000
Manila Polo	2,100,000	2,350,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	-	500,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	570,000	650,000
Manila Yacht Club		500,000
Metropolitan Club "A"	90,000	-
Mimosa (Individual)	-	140,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	210,000	275,000
Montemar (Individual)	50,000	-
Montemar (Corporate)	70,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"		230,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"		500,000
Puerto Azul		100,000
Quezon City Sports Club		200,000
Rockwell		380,000
Royale Tagaytay "A"		Please Call
Sherwood Hills "A"		80,000
Sherwood Hills "B"		130,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	170,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,300,000	1,500,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,400,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	220,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	350,000	400,000
Tagaytay Highlands	780,000	850,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	750,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	125,000	140,000
Valley Golf	Please Call	300,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,500,000	7,000,000

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ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1.3M	
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB		650K
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB "B"	60K	
CAMP JOHN HAY	220K	
CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	460K	450K
CAPITOL HILLS GOLF CLUB		150K
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB		165K
COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY	380K	
CLUB FILIPINO		140K
CEBU COUNTRY CLUB		1.250M
EAGLE RIDGE "A"		245K
FONTANA "D"	50K	
FOREST HILLS "A"		175K
HACIENDA LUISITA "B"		650K
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	250K	
MANILA GOLF CLUB (Ind.)	please call	
MANILA GOLF CLUB (Corp.)		please call
MANILA POLO CLUB	2.175M	
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"		450K
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"		520K
METRO CLUB "A"	110K	
MONTEMAR BEACH CLUB		30K
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "D"		240K
PUNTA FUEGO		500K
RIVIERA GOLF CLUB "A"	please call	
SHERWOOD HILLS "D"		130K
SPLENDIDO	300K	
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS		680K
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GIR to be tapped to pay gov't, Napocor debts

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas may have to draw from the country's foreign exchange reserves to pay the remaining $1.8 billion in maturing debts of the national government this year.

A borrowing program favoring the local market in 2004 may also spell trouble for the country's gross international reserves (GIR) next year, when the government and the National Power Corp. have to settle more than $6 billion in maturing debts.

In view of this, the central bank had asked the Department of Finance to evaluate its borrowing program this year and next "with an end in view to reducing, if not eliminating the foreign currency shortfall."

The BSP stressed that it was not encouraging the government to borrow more from overseas but only to borrow sufficiently to cover maturing foreign obligations. It said that raising funds from the local market and converting pesos to dollars would put pressure on the GIR and on the local currency.

Based on information received by the BSP, the national government is planning to borrow only $1 billion from offshore markets next year when its maturing obligations were expected to reach $3.925 billion. The amount is on top of the maturing debt of Napocor amounting to $2.071 billion.

The unadjusted GIR stood at $16.139 billion as of July although adjustments made by the International Monetary Fund placed the dollar reserves only at $13.7 billion in June.

The BSP said the IMF computation deducted $2.1 billion in gold and securities pledged as collateral for the country's short-term liabilities. *Clarissa S. Batino*

Ah, to be young again!

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

FOR breaking the law (whatever that law may be), the rogue soldiers in the Oakwood affair should be brought to justice. There are no two ways about this.

But watching the young ringleaders on TV, either during the mutiny or at the hearings in the Senate and the Feliciano Commission, I could not help but feel nostalgic. At age 77, I asked myself, "What was I doing at age 30?" I was one of a small group of executive trainees (the term was new then) at the FGU-Insular Life Insurance Group. At that time, the idea of recruiting, training, supervising and motivating aggressive young men fresh from college for future executive positions was just emerging. We were the pioneers in a great experiment in insurance management.

The world, albeit only the Philippine insurance world, was ours to conquer. But we did not fool ourselves. We realized that whatever we would accomplish in the mundane world of insurance—and we did accomplish a lot eventually—was not going to rate even a footnote in Philippine history.

And so, watching the ringleaders in their crew-cuts, I could not help but wonder what I would have done if I had been a young captain faced with the same problems at the tender age of 30.

Since ancient history, young men, in their exuberance, have turned the world around. Alexander the Great, one of history's greatest leaders, came to the throne at age 20 after the death of his father, King Philip of Macedonia. When Alexander died from fever and exhaustion at age 33, he had cut the Gordian knot and conquered most of the known world then.

Charlemagne, king of the Franks, was 29 when he became the first emperor of the medieval Western Empire.

Napoleon crowned himself emperor of the French at age 35. The whole world then looked at him, a former captain of artillery who never went to the military academy, as the greatest military genius who ever lived.

When Egyptian artillery shells would not explode during the first Israeli-Egyptian war in 1949, Abdel Nasser and half a dozen other colonels decided that their enemy was not in Tel Aviv but in Cairo.

Nasser staged a successful coup d'etat that drove King Farouk into leisurely exile at the French Riviera. Nasser was 34.

Except for a few old fogies like Marcelo H. del Pilar who died at 46, and Apolinario Mabini at 39, the pantheon of our national heroes is full of young men in their 20s and early 30s. Rizal was martyred at 35. Gregorio H. del Pilar was 24 when he was killed at Tirad Pass commanding Aguinaldo's rearguard. Andres Bonifacio, the Great Plebian, was 29 when he set up the Katipunan. Emilio Jacinto, Bonifacio's brain trust, was only 18. Emilio Aguinaldo was 27 when he started the 1896 Revolution and 29 when he became President of the Republic.

Those who led guerrilla units against the Japanese occupiers during World War II—Adevoso, Marking and Peralta—were all very young. Juan Miranda, a sergeant in Bataan, built the best guerrilla outfit in Bicol when he as not yet 30.

Malacañang need not fear the generals and colonels. They are either already corrupt or just coasting along toward retirement in the hope that they will land some cushy well-paying civilian job. It is the junior officers that Malacañang should take good care of. In the end, the Oakwood mutineers' real and only sin is that they failed. The next batch may not be so unfortunate.

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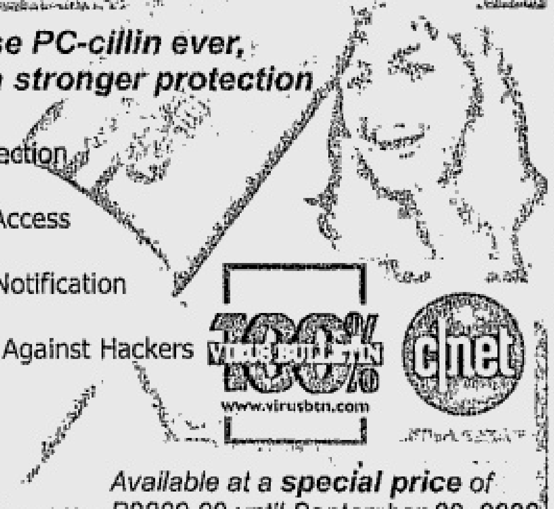

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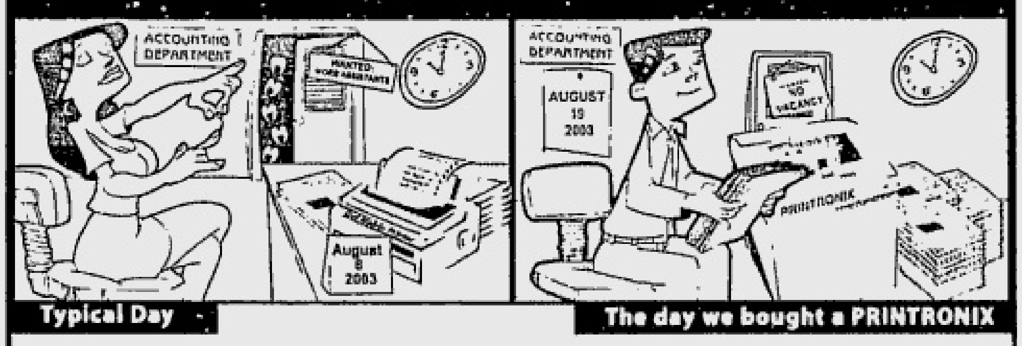

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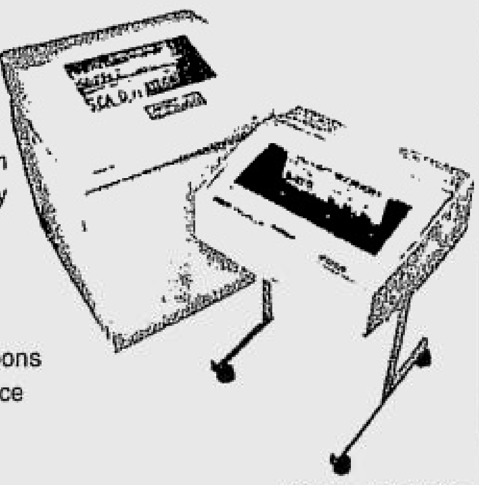

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US carriers seen softening stance on rates dispute

By Abigail L. Ho

AMERICAN carriers AT&T Corp. and MCI Worldcom Inc. are softening in their stance on the termination rates issue between them and some of the Philippines' largest telecommunication firms.

Bayan Telecommunications Inc. vice president for international business Sherry Ann Supelana revealed that both US carriers now appeared willing to pay higher termination rates, although they still have to agree to the 12 US cents per minute sought by local carriers.

"AT&T and MCI have always been in talks with BayanTel. They have agreed to increase their rates already," she told reporters in an interview last week.

She said local carriers including BayanTel, however, had remained firm on their decision to charge a 12-cent rate that they started to impose on Feb. 1.

"We're (BayanTel) non-negotiable on the rate. They know we have specific reasons for seeking a higher termination rate. They're showing some sort of agreement. They're already considering a rate increase," she added.

Right now, being a comparatively smaller player than industry giants Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc., Supelana said BayanTel would just stay in the sidelines and wait for the US carriers to "solve their problems with the giants."

While waiting, though, she said BayanTel would continue talking with AT&T and MCI Worldcom.

On Feb. 1, local carriers raised their termination rates from 8 US cents to 12 US cents for landlines and from 12 US cents to 16 US cents for cellular phones.

Termination rates are what a telecom firm pays another carrier to which its subscriber's call is terminated or completed.

While most foreign carriers had agreed to the new rates after negotiations, Worldcom and AT&T Corp. refused to accept the new rates and wanted status quo.

The two American carriers then filed a case against the Philippine carriers with the International Bureau of the United States Federal Communications Commission FCC).

AT&T and Worldcom accused local carriers of whipsawing, or pitting US carriers against each other to get better deals.

FCC International Bureau chief Donald Abelson ruled in favor of the US carriers and effectively suspended payments from all US carriers to their Philippine partners.

Traffic from the US was hardly affected by the payment suspension as American carriers were still able to course their traffic through firms in other countries with which Philippine carriers had live agreements.

Aguirre sister wants Banco Filipino placed under conservatorship

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE ESTRANGED sister of Banco Filipino vice-chair Albert Aguirre had asked the Makati Regional Trial Court to order the Monetary Board, the highest policy making body of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, to place the thrift bank under conservatorship and, eventually, to establish a management committee for the bank.

In a complaint filed with the Makati RTC civil unit last Wednesday, Banco Filipino stockholder Ana Marie Aguirre Koruga also asked the court, after preliminary summary hearing, to order private defendants—the directors and corporate secretary of Banco Filipino—to cease and desist from granting any loan or any financial accommodation to 48 companies allegedly directly or indirectly controlled by Aguirre, Koruga's brother.

"In the past few years, the directors and/or officers of Banco Filipino had engaged in unsafe, unsound and even fraudulent banking practices that have jeopardized the welfare of the bank, its shareholders and depositors," Koruga said.

Koruga noted that, based on documents she obtained, Banco Filipino had approved loans and/or lent sums of money to six alleged dummy borrower corporations of Aguirre which, at the time of the loan approval, had no financial capacity to justify the loans.

In her complaint, Koruga requested the Makati RTC to issue an order piercing the corporate veils of the six borrower companies—BF Home Depot Inc., Filipino Vastland Inc., Glamor World Inc., Taurus Land Inc., Tierrasud Inc., and Pro-Managers Inc.—and to direct the private defendants to rescind the loan transactions.

For its part, Banco Filipino has repeatedly refuted allegations that it had engaged in unsound banking practices that violated the country's banking laws. Earlier, Banco Filipino executive vice president and corporate secretary Francisco Rivera pointed out that Aguirre was neither a stockholder nor a director or officer of borrower-firms which got P1.6 billion in loans from Banco Filipino.

Banco Filipino maintained that the P1.6 billion in loans granted to firms allegedly associated with Aguirre were "in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations and the tenets of sound banking practices." Rivera also claimed that the bank's loans were fully secured with real estate and were appraised by duly licensed and independent appraisers.

Regarding the public defendants, Koruga pointed out that the MB members have, thus far, held off on imposing penalties such as the disqualification of the private defendants or, more importantly, placing the thrift bank under conservatorship or receivership for alleged repeated banking violations.

Breaktime

From page B2

deal actually raised some eyebrows in business to somewhere at the top of the Araneta Coliseum dome.

In business circles, they are actually asking who, this time, are Tonyboy's investors. Of course you remember who backed him up in the acquisition of PAL.

***

SUCH talk actually takes its cue from the other media venture of Tonyboy and his group, the called Dream Television, which uses broadcast (as against cable) for "pay" television.

Dream Television is to "pay" television what the cellular telephones are to telephony. It uses that most unique Pinoy invention, the retail system called *tingi*.

You can subscribe to Dream Television through prepaid cards, assuming of course you already have the gadgets such as the disc.

Anyway, the investors in Dream Television include the son-in-law of Tita Cory and the kumpadre of the man named Band...Wrist Band.

It's possible that, at long last, Tita Cory and Wrist Band are doing business together, even if they probably don't know it. Yet.

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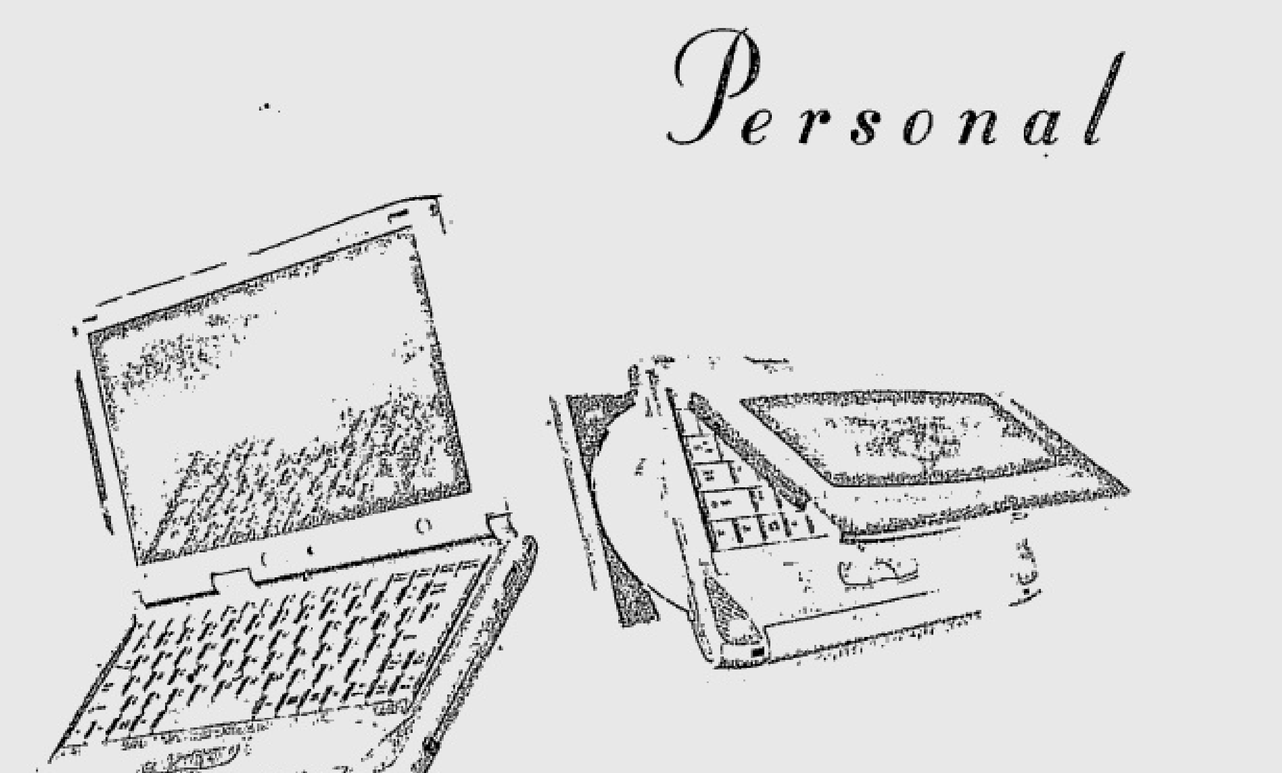

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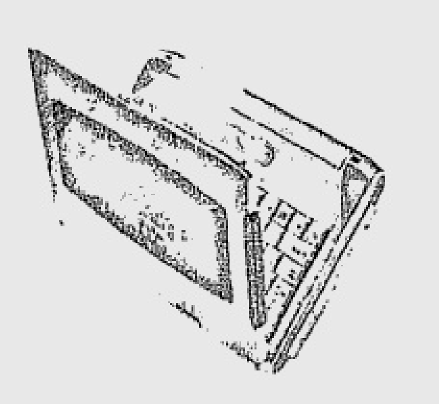

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Gov't bucks plea to defer implementation of new vehicle tax

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT cannot extend the 45-day period before the new excise tax law is implemented as requested by car manufacturers.

According to Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II, the car manufacturing industry's preference for a two to three-month period before the new law should take effect was not possible because the 45-day period stated in the newly ratified bill could not be changed.

Roxas, who is tasked to lead the formulation of the new law's implementing rules and regulations, said the IRR could only facilitate the implementation of the excise tax law but could not veer away from the 45-day period stated in it.

"The IRR cannot extend a benefit that the law does not provide. The IRR proceeds from the provisions of the law," Roxas said in a briefing with reporters.

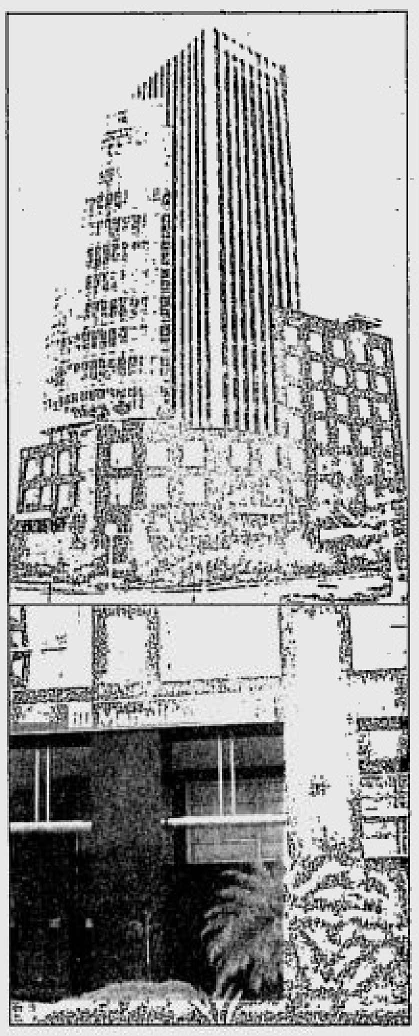
Industry members were hoping the 45-day period stated in the new law be stretched to at least two months to give manufacturers enough time to dispose of their inventories that carried higher prices under the previous excise tax system.

Elizabeth Lee, president of the Truck Manufacturers Association, said in a statement the group was pushing either of the House's or the Senate's provision which allowed for the implementation of the new law after two and three months, respectively. In the bicameral committee, however, the implementation period was shortened to 45 days.

"Since we could not determine the final tax scheme and corresponding price increases and impact on market demand, we needed this breathing space.

With the shortened transition period, many of the assemblers will now be stuck with orders in transit that will be difficult to sell and deplete at post-excise tax price levels," she said.

The bill proposing the shift of the excise tax system from engine displacement to value was passed by Congress' bicameral committee on Aug. 12 and was signed into law last week.



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ABS-CBN broke new ground once more when media mogul Eugenio "Geny" Lopez Jr. brought soap operas to television, this time as a station-produced endeavor. *Hiwaga sa Bahay na Bato*, a live TV serial banking on the talents of writer-directors Jose Miranda Cruz and Artemio Marquez, premiered in 1962 on ABS Channel 3. Later on, ABS-CBN added *Mga Bayani sa Kalawakan*, *Munting Banal*, *Prinsipeng Tulisan*, *Dakilang Panata*, and *Guhit ng Palad* to its formidable soap opera roster.

Larawan ng Pag-ibig, starring a then 9-year old Vilma Santos, was the first TV serial developed and produced for film in 1963.

ABS-CBN continues to be a trailblazer in the remarkable evolution of the soap opera genre. ABS-CBN teleseryes, as they are now called, have progressed from being purely dramatic serials to engrossing tales that incorporate music, fantasy, suspense and action. They continue to be undisputed winners in their time blocks and consistently best any foreign-produced counterpart. Local drawer *Mula Sa Puso* just completed its Malaysian run while *Pangako sa 'Yo*, which is currently airing in Malaysia and Indonesia, will be launched in Kenya this October, as a premiere showcase for an Asian series.

From radio hit to TV sensation, enthralling a captive local market to an emergent global audience··· certainly no sudsy ending for the soap opera story.

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Economists stick to US growth numbers-Fed poll

NEW YORK—Economists saw little reason to change their outlook for a moderate recovery in the US economy this year and next, a Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia survey said on Friday.

For 2003, growth is expected to average 2.3 percent, up slightly from the previous estimate of 2.2 percent made three months ago, the quarterly survey of 30 forecasters said.

Economic growth is forecast to accelerate to 3.7 percent in 2004, just above the 3.6 percent pace forecast in the previous survey, the Philadelphia Fed said.

The forecasts for next year are below the Fed's own estimate for growth in a 3.75 percent to 4.75 percent range.

"The prospects for economic growth over the next two years look about the same now as they did three months ago," the survey said.

Estimates for third-quarter GDP were nudged up to an annual rate of 3.5 percent, compared with 3.4 percent in the previous forecast. Indeed, many market economists have recently pushed their third quarter forecasts well above that, thanks to strong retail sales and housing figures for July.

Federal Reserve officials in recent days have suggested economic growth could run well above trend, or the 3 percent to 4 percent range, without raising any concerns about inflation.

The forecasters in the survey did cut their estimates for inflation over the near term, and raised their estimates for the unemployment rate.

The inflation forecasts were cut most sharply, with consumer price inflation now expected to average 1.8 percent in 2003 compared with a 2.4 percent forecast previously.

For 2004, the CPI forecast was trimmed to 2.0 percent from 2.3 percent.

Indeed, the concern of policymakers and financial markets earlier this year was deflation, or outright declines in the price levels. The Philadelphia Fed poll suggests no one is forecasting that.

Unemployment is seen averaging 6.1 percent this year and falling to 5.9 percent in 2004, compared with the forecasters' previous estimate of a 5.9 percent unemployment rate for this year and 5.7 percent for 2004.

After six straight months of job losses, the unemployment was 6.2 percent in July, just below an eight-year high.

The survey covers private-sector economists from groups as diverse as Lehman Brothers, the National Association of Home Builders and Georgia State University. *Reuters*

PRESIDENT Bush talks about the economy, both national and in the state of Washington, after a meeting with political and business leaders at Boeing Field in Seattle, Washington. AP

Dubai to allow quiet protests in IMF meet

DUBAI—The Gulf emirate of Dubai will allow peaceful protests during next month's annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, a senior police official said on Friday.

"We will allow all those who come to Dubai to express their opinion about the issues being discussed in the Dubai 2003 meeting," Police Brig. Gen. Abdul Aziz al-Bannai told the United Arab Emirate's official WAM news agency.

"The UAE is an open country that believes in freedom of opinion," he added.

The UAE, which has the highest percentage of foreigners in the Gulf region, is a pro-Western federation of seven emirates that include Dubai, the region's trade and tourism hub.

Bannai said protests could take the form of marches or organized gatherings in designated areas.

He, however, warned that police would crack down on any demonstrations that "turned violent or that threatened the proceedings."

Dubai will be the first Arab city to host the annual IMF and World Bank meetings.

The event, in which 184 countries are expected to take part, will run Sept. 17-25.

The government of Dubai has built a vast convention center and several hotels especially for the meeting.

The officials hope the meeting will boost the emirate's global reputation as a prime convention and holiday destination.

Bannai said the police force had spent more than three years preparing the massive security operation required for the event. *Reuters*

A BHUTANESE child rests on her mother's back at a vegetable market in Thimphu, capital of Bhutan. The country's economy, one of the world's smallest and least developed, is based on agriculture and forestry which provides the main livelihood for more than 90% of the population. REUTERS

US court orders $4-B Valdez award review

NEW YORK—A US appeals court has ordered a federal judge in Alaska to review the $4-billion punitive damages awarded from the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil tanker spill, lawyers and oil company officials said on Friday.

The US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, based in San Francisco, has asked US District Court Judge H. Russel Holland in Anchorage to look at the case again in light of a recent US Supreme Court ruling. In that case, Campbell v State Farm case, punitive damages were limited.

The original punitive damages award against tanker operator ExxonMobil , was $5 billion, but that was reduced to $4 billion last year. Exxon spokesperson Tom Cirigliano told Reuters on Friday the oil company will argue that under the guidelines of the State Farm case, damages should be less than $40 million.

The company has said it paid out $300 million voluntarily to more than 11,000 Alaskans and businesses affected by the 11-million gallon spill from the Valdez—the worst from a tanker in US waters. It spread oil to more than 1,000 miles (1,600 km) of coastline, killed thousands of sea mammals and birds and caused what government scientists say are lingering damages to a variety of marine species.

Dave Oesting, the lead plaintiff attorney in Anchorage, said the order to Judge Holland was a two-sentence directive merely asking his court to review the original ruling in light of the Supreme Court ruling.

"They're (Exxon) taking it totally out of context," he told Reuters. "They (the court) make no judgment about amount."

Oesting said he believed the $4-billion figure will hold up after the review.

"Unfortunately, this is going to cause more delay (in payment)," said Gerard Nolting, another attorney for plaintiffs. *Reuters*

Top firms seek breakthroughs in Cancun

GENEVA— Several top international corporations on Friday urged major trading nations to concentrate on liberalizing agriculture instead of seeking global investment guidelines and competition rules in deadlocked world trade talks.

Chairmen and chief executives of Deutsche Bank, Swiss-based food giant Nestlé, US drug company Pfizer and Dutch group Unilever issued a statement calling for breakthroughs on farming and on rules defining poor countries' access to cheaper medicines at a WTO ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico, next month.

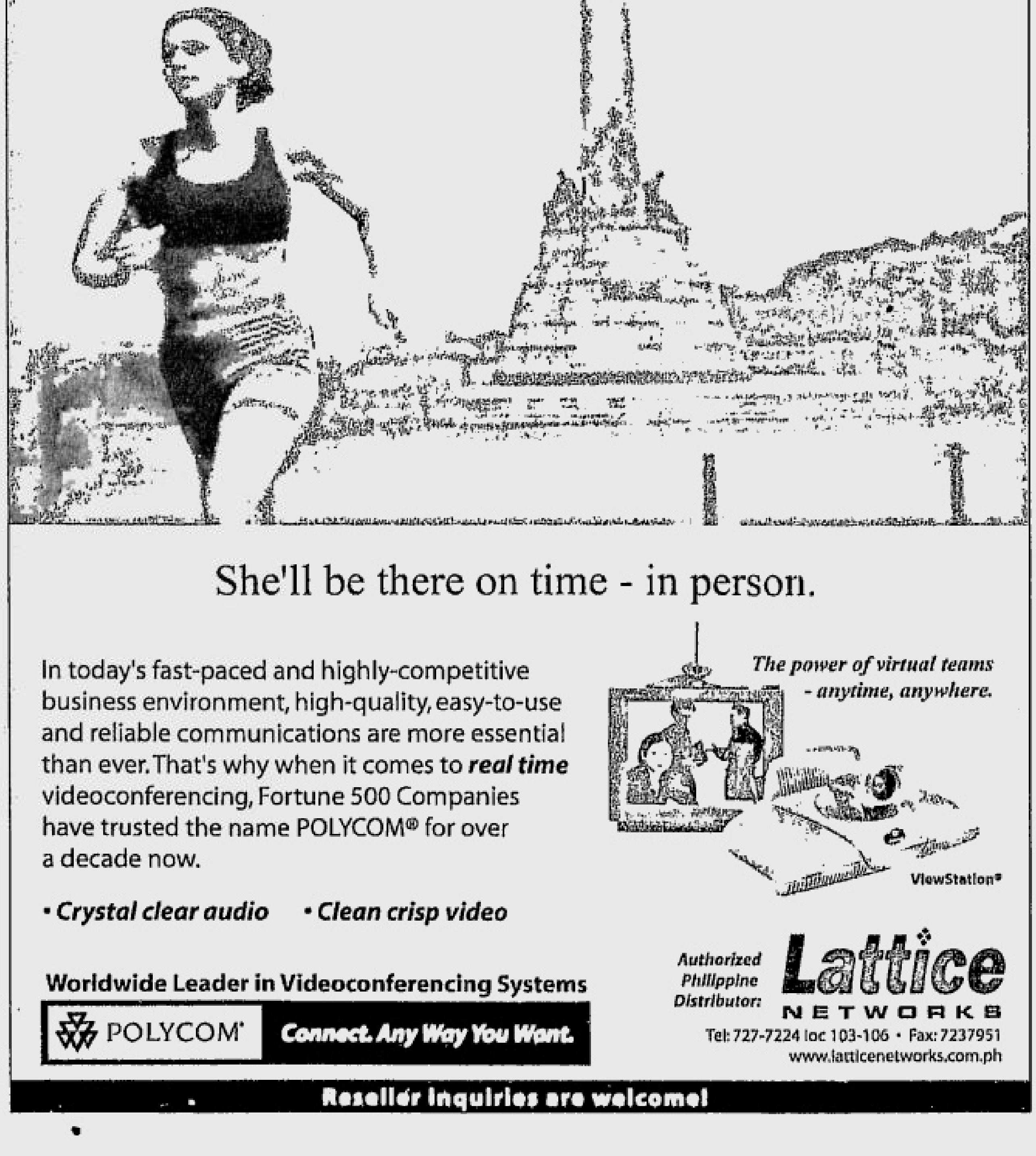
"Significant breakthroughs are required on key issues if the goals of the Doha Development Agenda are to be met on the agreed timetable, by end 2004 or shortly thereafter," the statement on behalf of the International Business Council's trade task force said.

They said progress in Cancun would stimulate faster and sustained growth in poor countries and reinvigorate international trade, "which is the single most important factor in driving economic growth and securing prosperity."

Negotiators at the World Trade Organization (WTO) are currently struggling to overcome disagreements on the two key issues of farming and medicines in time for Cancun, which is meant to try to revive trade liberalization efforts.

The industrial giants said Cancun needed to "avoid overloading this agenda with items on which consensus is yet to be reached such as investment guidelines, competition policy, trade facilitation and government procurement."

Instead, the companies want the 146 WTO members to agree on "clear and ambitious frameworks for removing damaging trade barriers in agriculture and manufacturing" in Cancun. *AFP*



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DaimlerChrysler settles lawsuit

FRANKFURT/DETROIT—DaimlerChrysler AG said on Friday it would pay $300 million to disgruntled former Chrysler investors to settle a lawsuit linked to the 1998 merger that formed the company.

But DaimlerChrysler vowed to continue fighting the lawsuit by billionaire investor Kirk Kerkorian that prompted the other US investors to sue.

DaimlerChrysler said the class-action plaintiffs—including some pension funds—were initially seeking $22 billion in damages in the class action at the district court in Delaware.

"Although DaimlerChrysler believes that the class action is completely without merit, the company has agreed to a settlement, since a local jury could have reached a different conclusion," the company said in a statement.

Kerkorian's company Tracinda, which owned 13 percent of Chrysler before the $40 billion Daimler merger, and other former investors sued the world's fifth-biggest carmaker, claiming the deal was billed as a merger of equals, rather than a takeover, to keep the price down.

The suits were filed after DaimlerChrysler Chief Executive Juergen Schrempp told the Financial Times that he had always meant to relegate Chrysler to a division of the group.

DaimlerChrysler said the settlement was subject to a definitive agreement and to court approval, adding that it would seek to recover $220 million from its insurers.

"The decision to resolve this litigation was approved by the company's supervisory board and enables the company to continue concentrating its resources on its business agenda," it said.

Shares in the group were about 1.45 percent lower in afternoon trading on the New York Stock Exchange at $37.45. *Reuters*

KING Leruo Tshekedi Molotlegi poses for a photograph at the Palace Hotel in Sun City. The Bafokeng tribe is Africa's richest, with platinum reserves expected to last up to 70 years and a rapidly diversifying economy that the king hopes will sustain his 300,000 subjects once the mineral resources in the kingdom are exhausted. REUTERS

Record US credit slump seen lingering

NEW YORK—US corporate borrowers are seeing far more rating downgrades than upgrades as the longest credit quality slump on record grinds on, although analysts see a turnaround by 2005.

Rating downgrades have topped upgrades for 21 quarters, the longest slump in a record dating to the mid-1980s, according to Moody's Investors Service.

Despite recent signs of a pick-up in economic growth, credit quality is not likely to turn a corner until 2005 because companies are struggling with thin profit margins, a debt overhang from the 1990s and unused plants, said Moody's chief economist John Lonski.

One silver lining is that in the third quarter to date, 74 percent of all rating outlook changes were favorable, Lonski said.

An outlook signals the likely direction of a rating over the next 18 months. Only 40 percent of outlook changes were favorable last year.

Although Moody's downgrade record only goes back to the mid-1980s, it is likely that companies are seeing one of the worst slumps in credit worth since the Great Depression, Lonski said.

The lingering rating erosion should be a warning for investors, who have bid up stocks and corporate bonds anticipating a strong recovery in the economy and profits, he said.

A similar concern came in a research note this week from Merrill Lynch & Co.'s global investment strategists, who said they have misgivings about the fundamental support for the stock market rally.

Only 31 percent of all rating changes this quarter were upgrades, according to Moody's. *Reuters*

GOLD STAYS HIGH

Oil up on shocks from Iraq

LONDON—Oil prices rose still higher over the week, as markets were rocked by the deadly bombing of the United Nations' headquarters in Baghdad as well as a.worrying drain to US petroleum stockpiles.

Oil prices rose yet higher, touching five-month peaks on concerns including the rapidly unraveling security situation in Iraq, fears of unrest in Nigeria and Venezuela, and principally, worries about draining US gasoline stocks.

Prices spiked higher on Thursday after weekly figures from the US Department of Energy had shown yet another fall in inventories of both crude oil and gasoline.

Of particular worry were gasoline stockpiles, which are at their lowest level for nine months.

Although gasoline reserves typically decline in summer as US drivers take to the roads for holidays, they are now 6.1 percent lower from the same time last year.

Also supporting prices was the increasing realization that Iraqi oil will take longer than even pessimists initially thought to return to world markets in sizeable amounts.

The week began with the news of a sabotage attack on the main oil pipeline from northern Iraq to Turkey, likely to put it out of action for up to a month.

On Tuesday the current inability of the US-led governing coalition to bring order to Iraq was bloodily emphasized when a huge truck bomb killed at least 23 people at the UN headquarters in Iraq, including the UN envoy.

Additionally, ethnic unrest in southern Nigeria's oil city of Warri sparked fears of a repeat to trouble which shut down 40 percent of the country's oil exports earlier this year.

In Venezuela, there were renewed fears that unrest connected to an opposition bid to unseat President Hugo Chavez could bring that country's oil exports to a halt, as happened early this year.

Precious metal prices also stayed strong, with gold keeping the bulk of recent gains despite a rising US dollar, and platinum approaching a near-quarter century high.

Gold maintained the bulk of its currently lofty price over the week, backed up by both physical and technical buying, although it was partly pegged back by the strong rise of the US dollar. *AFP*

Intel boosts PC demand forecast

SAN FRANCISCO—Intel Corp., the world's largest maker of microchips, boosted its forecast for revenue and profit margins on Friday because of stronger demand from computer makers, sending its shares to a 14-month high and lifting technology shares overall.

In a surprise statement, Intel said it now expected third-quarter revenue to rise roughly 11 percent from the second quarter, in a range of $7.3 billion to $7.8 billion. It had earlier set a target of $6.9 billion to $7.5 billion, up about 6 percent from second-quarter revenue of $6.8 billion.

Chief financial officer Andy Bryant said shipments of microprocessors, the brains of computers, were unexpectedly strong in every region.

He declined to call a definitive recovery in the ailing microchip industry, however, and said sales of communications chips remained soft.

In heavy trading, shares of the chip industry bellwether surged to their highest price since late May 2002, just before the stock collapsed following a profit warning from the company.

Following a three-year slump, the chip industry's worst ever, signs indicate a building recovery. The Intel forecast was likely to boost expectations for a quicker turnaround.

"Intel fed hopes that businesses would spend on plants and equipment, which are two legs of the stool that need to be fortified for the recovery to have a substantial basis," said John Davidson, president and CEO at PartnerRe Asset Management, which oversees more than $6 billion in assets. *Reuters*

Bronfman, NBC lead Vivendi suitors

PARIS—An investor group led by Edgar Bronfman Jr. and General Electric Co.'s NBC television network are the front-runners in a field of four suitors for Vivendi Universal's US entertainment activities, sources said Friday.

A Vivendi board meeting on Tuesday was expected to produce a short list of bidders for subsidiary Vivendi Universal Entertainment, the holding company for Universal movie studios, theme parks, USA Networks and Sci-Fi cable televisions.

"Advanced" negotiations for the sell-off of VUE are under way with Bronfman, who is Vivendi's biggest shareholder; NBC; and Liberty Media Corp., the leading US cable television company, a source close to the matter said.

The fourth candidate, US media group Viacom, has already expressed interest only in VUE cable television assets.

All four US bids include a "significant" cash element, the source said.

Vivendi urgently needs cash to speed up its debt-reduction program and win over credit ratings agencies which continue to class it a risky investment.

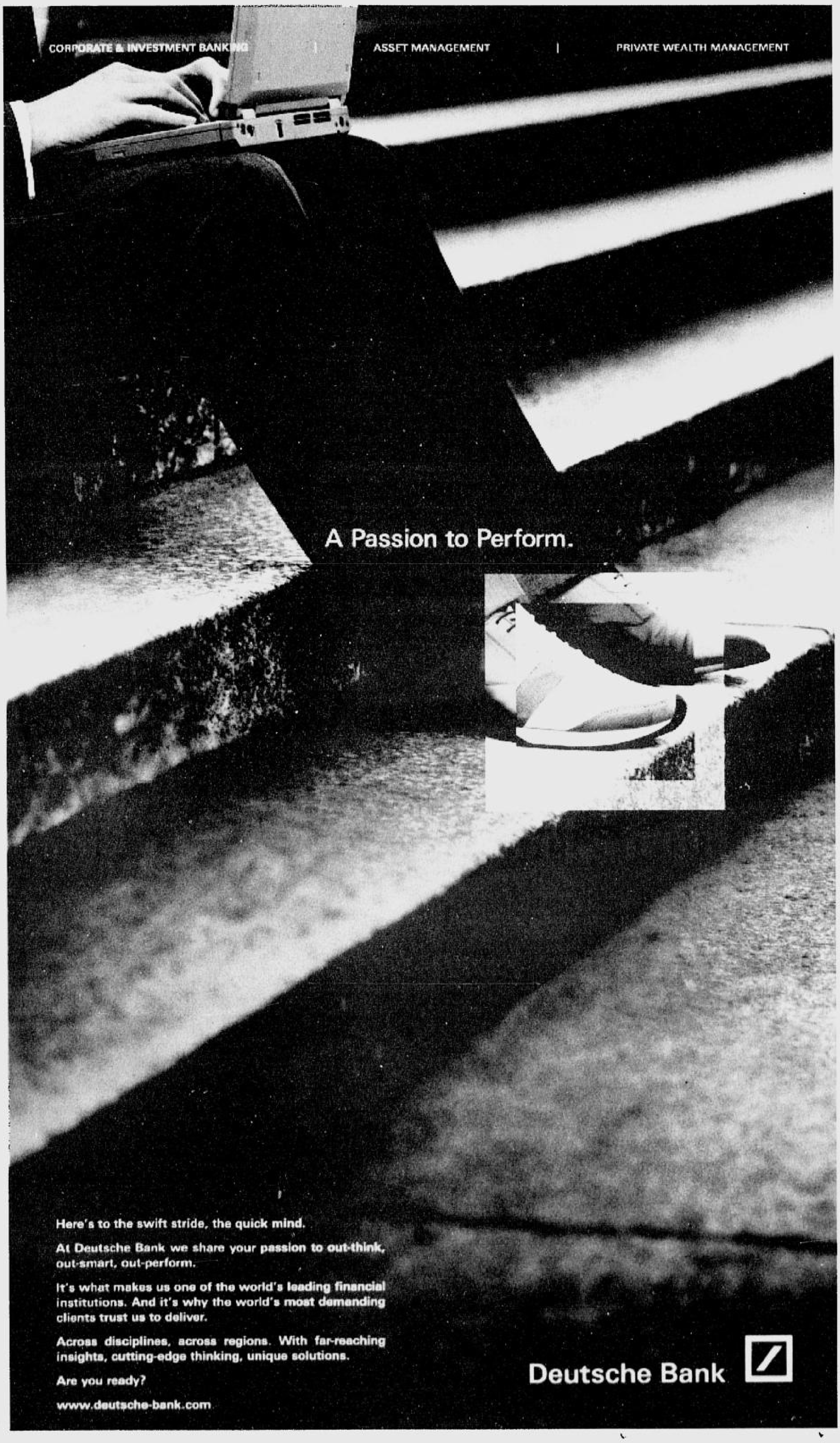
Debt stood at 13.5 billion euros ($14.6 billion) at the end of June, compared with $35 billion at the end of 2002.

Bronfman has offered $8 billion in cash, of which $2.5 billion would be used to assume VUE's debt, and a joint venture in VUE's cable television activities, making the entire envelope worth $13 billion for all of VUE, the source said.

Vivendi, the heavily indebted French media and telecommunications group, would become a minority shareholder in the new company.

The $2.5-billion debt figure was calculated under French accounting standards; using US standards, VUE debt would amount to $4 billion, the source said.

Bronfman, the former owner of Universal Studios which merged with Vivendi in 2000 to create Vivendi Universal, is the only candidate presenting a "total offer" for VUE that includes a fairly high cash element, the source noted. *AFP*



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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late SIXTO LLADOC & GENOVEVA HERNANDEZ was adjudicated to Jaine Esquilon, Epifanio, Quirino & Resurreccion as per Doc. 393 Page 80 Book IV Series of 2003 before Notary Public Cesar T. Ching of Marikina City.
PDI-Aug.14,18 & 25,2003

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Jose S. Laurel, III who died at Alabang, Muntinlupa City last January 6, 2003 has been extra-judicially settled by and among his heirs, in a document dated August 5, 2003, acknowledged before Notary Public Jose A. Oliveros of Pasig City, Doc. No. 1, Page 2, Book I, Series of 2003 of his Notarial Register.
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RONALD DE MARTIN HUFANO

Peacefully joined our Creator
on August 16, 2003 at the age of 34
at Dubai, UAE.

His ashes will be at Sto. Domingo Mortuary, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City till Wednesday, August 27, 2003, 12:00 noon.

Interment will be on Thursday, August 28, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. at Roxas Cemetery, Roxas Oriental Mindoro.

We request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

PORFIRIO A. RAMOS, SR.

Peacefully joined his Creator
on August 18, 2003 at the age of 75.

His remains lie in state at their residence in Happy Homes Centro, Daet, Camarines Norte.

Interment will be on August 31, 2003 at Daet Catholic Cemetery.

1LT. ALFREDO N. VILLAMANTE, SR. (RET)

who peacefully joined his Creator
on the 24th of August at the age of 80.

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His bereaved wife **Angeles**; children **Josie, Jesus, Jaime, Rolly, Fe, Cozette, Ten-Ten, Myko, Marilou, Momoy, Bal, Mona, Gina, Imelda, Janet**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at #21 Mabilis Street, Barangay Pinyahan, Quezon City.

Interment will be on August 30, 2003, Saturday, at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, after the 8:30 a.m. Mass at Barangay Pinyahan Chapel, Malakas St., Quezon City.

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Her husband **Dionisio (Boy)**; children **Herbert & Amy, Lizette & Joey, Lambert, Nova & Chat**; grandchildren **Bettina, Paulo, Martin, Camille, CJ, Patis & Sabrina**, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Our Lady of Consolation Parish, Mira Nila Homes, Q.C. Cremation will be at the La Funeraria Paz Crematory at 9:00 a.m. on August 28, 2003.

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on August 22, 2003 at the age of 89.

We join his bereaved children **Edgardo, Mario** and **Bessie, Celia, Delia, Hector** and **Nellie, Gerry** and **Carole**; sister; grandchildren and great grandchildren; relatives and friends in their prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at 87 Medicion 1st, Imus, Cavite.

Interment will be on Wednesday, August 27, 2003 at the Imus Cemetery after the 3:15 p.m. Holy Mass at the Imus Cathedral.

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DISPOSAL COMMITTEE
DECS Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City

INVITATION TO BID

The Department of Education through the Disposal Committee is inviting all interested entities to bid for the disposal of various unserviceable equipments/scrap materials situated at the DepEd Central Office, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.

All interested entities may inspect all equipments/furniture and avail of the bidding documents upon submission of a letter of intent starting August 25-29, 2003 at the Property Division, Rizal Building II, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on September 3, 2003, 10:00 a.m. at the Property Division. The deadline for the submission and opening of bids shall be on September 10, 2003 at the same time and place mentioned above.

DepEd Disposal Committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of bids. DepEd Disposal Committee further reserves the right to declare a failure of bid, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Chairman
DepEd Central Office-Disposal Committee

(PDI-Aug 23 & 25, 2003)

TENDER

www.henrybutcher.com

ACQUISITION OF 100% OF THE SHAREHOLDING IN A PALM OIL MILL FOR SALE BY TENDER

Tenders Due Noon, Friday 12 September 2003

BACKGROUND
The company for sale is Kenram Industrial & Development Inc ('KIDI'). The mill, which produces crude palm oil (CPO), palm kernel oil (PKO) and palm kernel cake (PKC), started in 1972 at a capacity of 4 tons of FFB (Fresh Fruit Bunch) per hour using 2 hydraulic presses. In 1975 it was upgraded to 10 tons per hour using 1 screw press. In 1979 the mill was upgraded to 20 tons per hour, its current capacity. The maximum design capacity is 24 tons per hour. The majority of the mill plant is Stork, manufactured in Amsterdam. The present owners have decided at Board level to sell 100% of the shareholding in the mill.

PRODUCTS AND CAPACITIES
The Crude Palm Oil (CPO) Output is 3.6 tons per hour at 18% Oil Extraction Ratio (OER). Kernel Output is 0.8 - 1.0 MT tons of kernel per hour at 4-5% Palm Kernel Extraction Ratio (PKER). The Palm Kernel Crushing Plant Capacity is 1.35 MT tons of kernel at full capacity. The Palm Kernel Oil Output is 0.54 MT of Palm Kernel Oil (PKO) per hour at 40% PKER and full capacity. The Palm Kernel Cake Output is 0.74 MT tons of Palm Kernel Cake (PKC) per hour at 55% Palm Kernel Cake Extraction Ratio (PKCER) at full capacity.

There has been numerous upgrading and new plant installation since 1990. A complete list is available on request.

Located:	Isulan, Sultan Kudarat (near General Santos), Mindanao, Philippines
Viewing:	Strictly by appointment only
Tender Due Date:	Noon, Friday 12 September 2003. Full set of Tender Documents available on request.
Buyers Premium:	5% of the sale price.

HENRY BUTCHER
GoIndustry INDUSTRIAL ASSET DISPOSAL & VALUATION
HENRY BUTCHER INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES INC.
Rm. 102 Jolliland Bldg., 670 Edsa, Pasay City, Philippines
Tel No.: +(63-2) 852-2910 * 11 Fax No.: +(63-2) 831-9507
E-mail: manila@henrybutcher.com
Website: www.henrybutcher.com/www.goindustry.com

NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT AT THE DIRECTORS' AND STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING OF EPSILON HOLDINGS CORPORATION HELD ON 4 AUGUST 2003 AT ITS PRINCIPAL OFFICES LOCATED AT THE GROUND FLOOR, TRINITY BUILDING, T.M. KALAW STREET, ERMITA, MANILA, THE MAJORITY OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND THE STOCKHOLDERS REPRESENTING MORE THAN 2/3 OF THE OUTSTANDING CAPITAL STOCK OF THE CORPORATION HAVE DECIDED TO EFFECT THE VOLUNTARY DISSOLUTION OF THE CORPORATION BY AMENDING ITS ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION TO SHORTEN ITS CORPORATE TERM TO 15 AUGUST 2003.

(PDI - AUGUST 11, 18 & 25, 2003)

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

As demand for IT professionals grows, Informatics expands

A HIGH growth rate in Information Technology (IT) professional occupations is expected to continue. The 10-year occupational employment projections prepared by the US Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate that, between 2000 and 2010, there will be 2.5 million new jobs for IT professionals resulting from growth in the occupations (2.2 million) and the need to replace those leaving the profession (331,000).

With these statistics implying the crucial need for more IT proficient workers, IT education and training should meet the requirements and demands of the changing business environment. In Singapore, the Economic Development Board (EDB) was established to ensure that the country's education and training systems were generating the right skills for industry. Provisions for vocational training were set by the Singapore Productivity and Standards board, which works with employers to meet the demands of existing and new industries.

Informatics, having been established in Singapore, takes pride in having developed an education system that has passed Singapore's standards and has been successfully recognized worldwide for IT Education and Training.

In the Philippines, Informatics has successfully set a new standard in quality IT education and training by offering up-to-date curricula that is at par with the rest of the world; hands-on training that ensures complete transfer of knowledge; international certifications and diplomas and high-tech facilities in strategic locations like malls and commercial districts.

Through franchising, Informatics has opened about 45 locations nationwide since it was first launched in SM Megamall. The business model from Singapore is the same business model that is turned over to the franchisees for execution.

The role of Informatics in keeping the Filipinos ' skills.continuously upgraded in the IT field is a noble job that Informatics is ready to share with budding or experienced entrepreneurs in the country.

Set for expansion, Informatics will hold a free business seminar to be held at the Edsa Shangri-la Hotel on Aug. 28, Thursday at 1 p.m. Participants will learn about the following significant topics in the education franchising business: Trends in global education business; various training and education franchises available in the Philippines; putting up a franchise using a Singapore-based franchise model and making your IT education franchise a personally and professionally rewarding experience.

For more details, call Beth Macaligar at 727-0401 local 134 to 135 or e-mail emacaligar@informatics.com.ph.

ADORABLE WINNERS AT ALPO PUPPY FESTIVAL

Ramon Villanueva's Rottweiler 'Dagger' (left) won the Shiniest Coat award at the Alpo Puppy Festival at Robinson's Manila held July 20. Other winners are John Naga's Siberian Husky 'Big J' (center), who won the Top Dog award, and Edwin Du's American Cocker Spaniel 'Carla' (right), which was the Alpo Puppy Festival's Most Adorable Puppy. Standing left is Nestlé Purina PetCare sales executive Dr. Toti Baylon. The Alpo Puppy Festival is the only dog show in the country exclusively for puppies; Alpo for Small Breeds was also launched during the event.

PRUDENTIALIFE GROUNDBREAKING IN NUEVA ECIJA

Prudentialife president Jose Alberto T. Alba led the groundbreaking ceremony of the new Prudentialife building in Nueva Ecija June 12 at Barangay Dicarma, Maharlika Highway, Cabanatuan City. This project is part of Prudentialife's expansion program to better serve its planholders and customers in Northern Eastern Luzon. The building is expected o be completed this December. Shown, from left, are first vice president for special projects Homer P. Blanco, senior vice president for marketing-provincial Manuel J. Duran, Alba, SVP for marketing-Luzon Robert F. Aldeguer, VP-marketing/regional director Fred J. Misona and SVP-comptroller Rod U. Cabrera.

Seminar helps families combat drug addiction

MEDICAL experts will talk on how to combat drug addiction during a one-day seminar on Aug. 30 at the Sulo Hotel in Diliman, Quezon City.

Entitled "Awareness, Commitment, Action-Combatants of Drug Addiction," the seminar dovetails with the call of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for an all-out war against illegal drugs.

Other topics include Drug Abuse in the Workplace, Medical Aspects of Drug Addiction, Treatment and Rehabilitation of Drug Dependents, Co-Dependency and the latest provisions of the law that are contained in Republic Act 9165 otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

The seminar will be helpful to families with drug dependency problems, employees and employers, school administrators and counselors, barangay officials, security agencies and workers of other rehabilitation centers.

The resource speakers are Dr. Allan Dionisio MD of the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital and an accredited physician of the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), Dr. Sarah Bellosillo MD, acting chief of the TRD-DDB, Lilia V. Dulay, chief of the Petid-DDB, and lawyer Cesar Posada, DDB chief legal officer and deputy director for operations.

The activity is sponsored by the Association of Families Against Drug Abuse Inc (Afada) in cooperation with the Dangerous Drugs Board-European Union Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (DDB-EU TRC).

The Afada is a non-government organization, non-stock corporation and active supporter of various DDB-EU TRC drug abuse rehabilitation-related activities.

The Afada and DDB-EU TRC believe that the government cannot successfully fight the problem of drug addiction without the active participation of its citizenry.

For reservations and inquiries, call DDB-EU TRC at 939-5917, look for Rex or Bobbie, or text 0917-9673347 or 0917-3222770. The seminar fee of P800 includes lunch, morning and afternoon snacks, materials and certificate of attendance.

SHELL JOINS CLEAN AIR CAMPAIGN

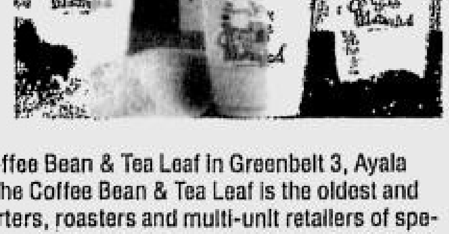
Shell joins the multi-sectoral regional initiative on air quality management as full private sector member of the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia). Shell, along with 20 of the largest cities and 60 national government agencies, NGOs, and universities that earlier joined the initiative, will bring financing and undertake activities to support CAI-Asia-founded in 2001 to promote and demonstrate innovative ways to improve the air quality of Asian cities through the sharing of experiences and building of partnerships. Shown is Eliseo Santiago (right), Shell companies in the Philippines country chair and president, receiving the Certificate of Membership from Dr. Supat Wangwongwatana, chair of CAI-Asia, during the special conference on welcoming the private sector members of CAI-Asia and the launching of the Reducing Vehicle Emissions in Asia Policy Guidelines held at the Asian Development Bank of the Philippines in Ortigas June 10.

Product Files

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf's 'real deal'

THE FIRST Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf outlet in Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, is bringing the real deal, the Original Ice Blended drink to Philippine shores, along with the distinctive line of beverages created by California-based importers, roasters and multi-unit retailers of coffee and tea.

There are initially five coffee-based variants to choose from: the classic mocha and vanilla, the creamy Caramel Ice Blended, maraschino cherry-dotted Black Forest, and the Ultimate Ice Blended. The creamy drinks are laced with non-fat milk, making them an indulgence light on the calories but heavy on the flavor. Even the health conscious can spoil themselves with the Coffee Bean luxury, as all Ice Blended drinks are available 99.9-percent fat-free



The Original Ice Blended drinks, with the coffee and non-coffee variants, are now available at The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf in Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center. Founded in 1963, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf is the oldest and largest privately held importers, roasters and multi-unit retailers of specialty coffee and tea in the United States. The company serves 30 million beverages annually

Bits & Clips

High tea, fine wines

EDSA Shangri-La, Manila's Lobby Lounge serves a buffet of fine wines and afternoon high tea this August. Overlooking the lagoon and lush tropical gardens, the Lobby Lounge is the ideal place to meet and socialize while enjoying afternoon high tea. "High Tea at the Lobby" features smoked salmon quiche, Thai crab cakes, chicken wings and shitake mushrooms, vegetarian Indian samosa, vermicelli wrapped prawns, beef and black pepper pies, tuna burgers with wasabi mayonnaise, spicy chorizo empanaditas, and more, available until Aug. 30, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The "Wine Buffet" features Chile's Siete Soles, Australia's Matthew Lang, France's Robert Giraud Grand Vins de Bordeaux, and US Californian Vendage, available daily from 7 p.m. to midnight, until Aug. 31. For inquiries and reservations, call 634-7373 or 633-8888 extensions 2738 and 2739.

Jollibee contest extended

THE DEADLINE for Jollibee's Say BEE Photo Contest is extended until Aug. 30. Professionals and non-professionals alike have the chance to enter photos that depict the theme '*Basta may Jollibee, buhay ay lalong sumasarap, lalong sumasaya.*" Photos in the professional-published category must be published in any Philippine publication from July 15, 2002 to Aug. 30, 2003 and must be accompanied by original clippings with the exact publishing date. All entries will be judged according to the relevance to the theme, technical merit or artistry or composition, and visual impact. Send your entries to Say Bee! Photo Contest, Stratworks Inc, 7th Floor, RCI Building, 105 Rada Street, Legaspi Village, 1229 Makati City. For inquiries, call Stratworks at 751-3805/06.

PBBY kids' literature confab

THE PHILIPPINE Board on Books for Young People (PBBY) announces its forthcoming first-ever National Conference on Children's Literature to be held from Aug. 29 to 31 at the Holiday Inn Galleria Manila (formerly Galleria Suites). It will be the first organized attempt to discuss all issues-economic, social, political, creative and cultural-related to the publication and patronage of children's books, and readership among the youth in the Philippines. The conference is scheduled to coincide with the opening of the Manila International Bookfair. Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin keynotes the conference. Interested parties can register at the PBBY secretariat care of Adarna House, Room 102 JGS Building, Scout Tuazon Street, Barangay Laging Handa, Quezon City, or call 372-3548

PHILIPS AT PNP STORE OPENING (23PHILIPS)

Philips Consumer Electronics (PCE), Europe's number one consumer electronics company, joined the Philippine National Police (PNP) in the recent opening of the PNP Store in Camp Crame, a cooperative service outlet for PNP personnel. Philips latest technology in audio and video equipment will now be made available to all PNP personnel in the country. Fast-rising celebrity Andrea del Rosario also visited the Philips booth and signed autographs. Shown, from left, are Clark Popple, PCE institutional sales manager, Michelle Cruz, PCE marketing assistant, Andrea del Rosario, PSupt. John Jambora, PNP service store systems OIC-operations, and Alvin Dee, PCE account manager, during the event.

Slazenger

101 YEARS OF WIMBLEDON CHEER WITH SLAZENGER

For the first time, the Slazenger Wimbledon ball manufactured in the Philippines by Dunlop Slazenger will be used in the world's most prestigious tennis tournament-the Wimbledon Championships 2003. Shown are DSP officials Cecile Reyes (general manager, DSII), Jeremy Nordberg (group HR director), Julius Manalo (general manager, DSPI), Alasdair Marnoch (group controller) and Phil Parnell (chief executive officer).

A twist in old burial traditions

THE AUGUSTINIAN fathers bring back this old tradition of burying the dead within the church premises with the establishment of The Columbary. Unlike the tradition before, no hefty donations will be involved. The Columbary serves as a depository of the ash of a cremated body. "Columbary comes from the Latin word columbarium, a place where the ancient Romans kept the urns containing the remains of the cremated bodies. The Columbary stands as a sanctuary where one can honor a departed loved one. Vaults are provided to keep the urns containing the ashes of the cremated body. It is housed within the San Agustin Seminary and within the Chapel of the Sto. Nino de Cebu", explains Liz Reyes, The Columbary marketing director.

Developed by Redoble Development Corp, The Columbary is located along Visayas Avenue, Quezon City. The vaults measure 12" x 14" x 16" and can accommodate up to four urns. Urns can be brought home during special occasions as desired by the family.

"The Columbary vaults, compared to the traditional memorial lots, are more economical and practical. Perpetual usage of The Columbary vault is guaranteed and a maintenance fund is provided for its upkeep. The Columbary of Santo Nino de Cebu elevates the ancient practice to the present Christian tradition to honor your beloved departed in a place of dignity and holiness and inside the lush garden of the San Agustin Seminary," added Reyes.

A Sunday mass in the chapel is held every week. The South Memorial Wall vaults are now available. The North, East, and West memorial walls and the Sanctuary vaults will be available soon. For inquiries, call 425-1508/09

Smart . . .

From page B16

Smart wanted to increase its revenue share from 50 percent to 70 percent.

ABS-CBN, through Internet arm ABS-CBN Interactive, had been earning revenues from SMS-based services provided through "Game Ka Na Ba?" and ABS-CBN news shows.

The partnership with Smart has earned ABS-CBN about P5 million in monthly revenues from the previous 50-50 revenue-sharing deal.

Industry sources revealed that ABS-CBN has finally agreed to the new revenue-sharing scheme, which is a 70-30 deal.

"We don't have any deadlines as to when this deal would be finalized. But we're still working on the agreement," Isberto said.

Oracle . . .

From page B16

Called Oracle10G, the database overhaul is being beta-tested by Oracle customers and is currently being deployed in pilot projects within Oracle itself, according to an Oracle official.

Oracle executive vice president Charles Phillips said Oracle10G is the first grid computing product to be offered commercially as an enterprise solution, and will be announced at the annual OracleWorld conference in San Francisco in the first week of September. Phillips, however, declined to name an exact date for the actual market launch of the product.

"Oracle10G was four years in the making and it will be the next generation of our technology," Phillips told reporters. "On the enterprise level, you should be able to pool together services on top of the grid and balance the load across the network. We've taken the idea of grid computing and converted it to a commercial application that's ready for the enterprise."

Grid computing is a concept borne out of academic and scientific Internet communities. The idea is to pool together computing resources over the Internet or other networks and share the horsepower among applications which need them most. The end result is load balancing and prioritization shared by different processors residing in different servers over the network.

"If there's excess capacity on the grid, you should be able to find it then share the load," said Phillips. "Some applications like retail apps are heavily used in December, while others are also seasonal. So you have to optimize the usage of computing power and balance the load across the network."

While the idea is sound, making it work is much harder because no single software is capable of managing the enterprise network to the extent of switching processing powers or allocating resources to prioritized applications at any given time. Oracle now plans to do that with Oracle10G.

"Grid computing is a software management issue—not a hardware problem. But since it was developed by the scientific community, it was not programmed for business," said Phillips. "So we took that concept and wrote it for the enterprise."

Betting the farm

At last year's OracleWorld, Oracle chair and CEO Larry Ellison hinted that the company would make its next push toward grid computing, having gone through the demand for clustering technology. Now, Oracle is betting the farm on grid computing.

"This is huge," said Phillips. "This will be our next technology push for the next three years. We're talking about it now and we're trying to educate people about grid computing, and hopefully businesses would adopt it in the next couple of years."

By letting a pool of servers on a grid perform the task of several applications rather than relying on just one server, grid computing becomes an important first step toward the idea of utility computing. Utility computing is the concept of having computational power and network resources available all the time to users, similar to public utilities such as electricity or water. The idea is to just turn on a user's computer which is automatically connected to a network, without having to worry about where it is connected or which server would process his or her requests. By having the grid software manage the processing load, the computing resource provider—similar to a phone service provider—would be able to manage which server on the grid would be free to take on the extra processing requirement.

According to Phillips, grid computing is not just another area for Oracle's growth on the enterprise software market but also represents a move toward architectural simplicity on the enterprise level.

"We think the timing is right for architectural simplicity," he said. "You should have products on the network that work as a team, with common security functions, directory management and common alert systems and so on. When you have the interaction between commodity applications on top of grid software, you'd give incremental value to the customers because they were designed to work together right from the start. We think we've built something that's architecturally integrated."

Asked if this dream of tight architectural integration and application interaction would entail having to use Oracle products exclusively, Phillips said: "Other (enterprise software) are more complicated because they were written on Unicode. Without architectural integration the entire process becomes costly."

Gartner: Thai example shows Microsoft can drop prices

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

GOVERNMENT pressures can force Microsoft to drop its prices, according to analysts at US-based research firm Gartner Group.

This revelation was based on a recent Gartner finding that only 40 percent of desktop personal computers (PCs) shipped in Thailand had a licensed copy of Windows installed during the second quarter of 2003. Gartner considered this level a "historic low" for the country.

Analysts at Gartner noted that the current Thai government program aimed at delivering one million Linux PCs to low-income citizens has proven to be a bane for Microsoft.

Thai vendors were forced to lower prices of entry-level PCs from about $620 to about $320 in the past six months in response to this program, analysts observed.

Most entry-level PCs came preloaded with the Linux operating system and associated software applications instead of Windows.

Gartner analysts said Microsoft originally declined to offer software for the Thai government program at the required pricing level.

However, after the Thai government introduced its PC program, Microsoft was forced to create a special price—about $40, plus service fee for Thai-language Windows XP Home and Office XP Standard.

Analysts said that Microsoft had been focusing on the corporate market in Thailand before joining the government ICT PC program. The software company did not even offer Thai-language versions of many important products, Gartner added.

Due to the success of the Thai government in lowering the price of Microsoft software, other Asian countries are now considering programs similar to what Thailand did, Gartner said.

Following the Thai experience, Gartner analysts believe Microsoft is currently considering different pricing schemes in other countries to address the drop in its market share.

Microsoft's share of the Thai new-PC market in 2003 was 50 percent lower than in the same period in 2001, despite a 98-percent growth rate in Windows original equipment manufacturing licenses, Gartner noted.

Sobig virus wanes after wreaking havoc on PCs

NEW YORK—The Sobig.F virus, which invaded hundreds of thousands of computers last week, appeared to be slowing down, said experts who succeeded in blocking the virus' propagation access.

Vincent Weafer of the Symantec computer safety products company, told CNBC cable news: "At this time there is nothing harmful coming out of the 20 servers that were transmitting the virus."

Computer protection specialists toiled through the day to stem the "epidemic" by repairing the 20 servers which the virus had used to stuff innumerable e-mail boxes with infectious messages.

The Sobig.F virus, a worm that has the ability to infect computer operating systems without human intervention, multiplies by using e-mail addresses it finds in computers it infects. It targets computers using Microsoft's Windows operating system. Experts say it is the fastest propagation system yet encountered. *AFP*

ICT . . .

From page B16

60 days to come up with the implementing rules and regulations.

Ms Macapagal has ordered the ITECC to create the ICT Commission as a precursor to the proposed Department of Information and Communications Technology, which has not been realized despite lobbying from the ITECC and various industry organizations in Congress.

The measure creating the ICT department has been shelved at the committee on transportation and communications in Congress. Various representatives in Congress have proposed bills leading to the establishment of the ICT super agency since 1992.

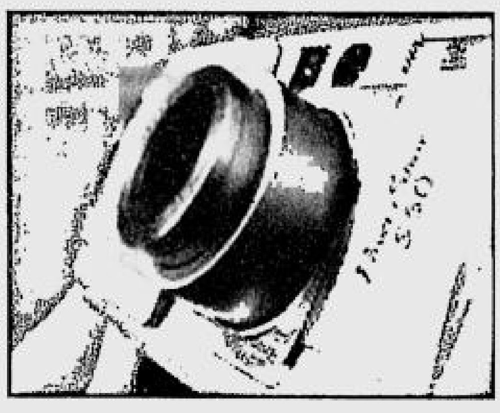
Under the proposed ICT Commission, the National Computer Center, an attached agency to the Department of Science and Technology, and other agencies with related ICT functions and mandate, would be placed under this government body.

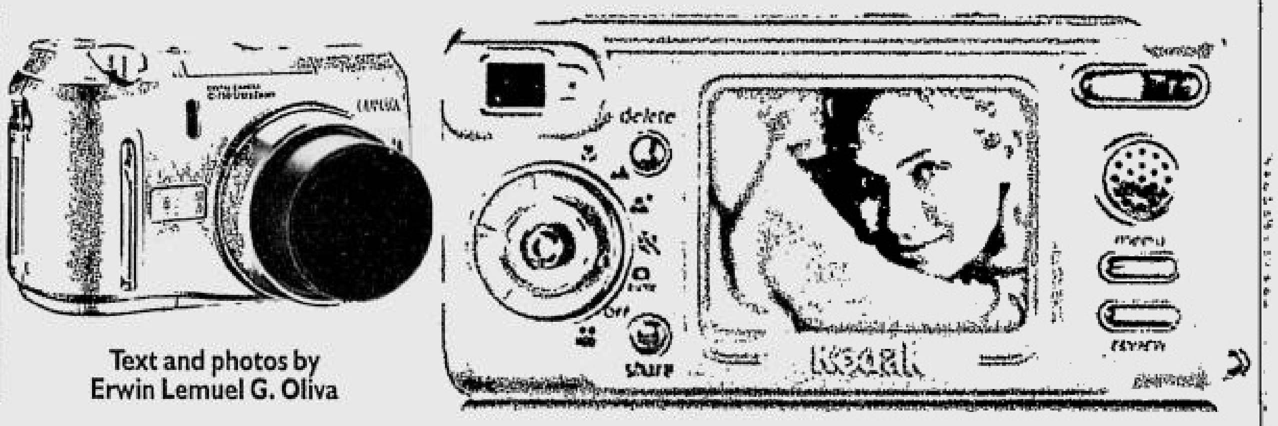
These agencies include the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), and the Telecommunications Office—most of which are agencies under the Department of Transportation and Communications. The NTC, however, would retain its "personality" and relationship with the DOTC.

One of the proposed responsibilities of the ICT Commission is to serve as an implementing arm of the ITECC for projects the ITECC designates. The ITECC's role as the country's highest policymaking body for information and communications technology would also likely be transferred to the planned ICT Commission.

Malacañang is also expected to appoint the ICT Commission head, and name commissioners holding concurrent positions in each agency brought under the ICT Commission.

When it comes to digicams, just shoot me!





Text and photos by
Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

THE SAYING goes that a picture is worth a thousand words. In this digital age, we now count them by the megapixels.

The world of digital photography is at the hands of consumers. The term megapixel (a description pertaining to the resolution or quality of a digital image) is now becoming as common as other words such as megahertz, gigahertz, megabytes and gigabytes.

Once limited to professionals, the digital camera has evolved into a sophisticated tool to capture great moments instantly. Choosing the best shots and printing them have also been made easy with digital photography. The need to line up at a photo lab has practically become unnecessary.

Remember the time when you were trying to take a perfect shot of your child's first step or smile? Can you still recall how many rolls of film you wasted on those shots in the name of (no pun intended) a "Kodak moment"?

My experience with digital cameras was nothing short of a revelation of sorts. With the traditional camera, you are more prone to make a mistake and deal with it. Digital cameras provide some freedom for people. However, the biggest problem nowadays is choosing what brand to buy. I've tested at least three digital cameras this time. Each delivered unique benefits. Of course, each also had their downsides. But for the sake of this review, I'll try to become as objective (not!) as possible.

For this review, we look closely at three products: the Kodak LS633, the Canon PowerShot S50, and the Olympus Camedia 750 Ultra Zoom.

Kodak LS633

First, let's inspect the Kodak LS633, the latest addition to the family of Kodak cameras.

Initial take: The organic light emitting diode (OLED) display caught my fancy. Among the three digital cameras, the OLED display stands out. This is the world's first 2.2-inch OLED display that can be viewed at a 165-degree-wide viewing angle. Digital images looked crisp and beautiful with this one.

However, here's a caveat to would-be buyers: the display fails to do justice to the quality of shots when printed afterwards. I used a a Kodak EasyShare printer dock 6000, a portable photo printer by Kodak, to see the results of my photo shoot.

Admittedly, colors were off, although the OLED display showed otherwise. I also tried printing the digital photos on a separate printer, but the result was the same.

Still the LS633 was by far the most user-friendly digital camera that I have tested. And so were the other Kodak models. The digital camera can be readily used even by a child, which means it is a point-and-shoot product.

The LS 633 digital camera provides ways to easily adjust shots to different light settings and exposures (i.e. night, sport) with a flick of a button. Shots can also be printed or shared readily to other people via a one-touch button. The controls and menus are easy to understand and intuitive. And, if you have the extra money, you can purchase the portable printer-cum-dock to go with the camera.

The LS 633 supports a 3.1-megapixel image resolution, and 16 megabytes of internal memory that can be expanded with a multimedia card or secure digital memory media. The Kodak LS633 also comes with the Schneider-Kreuznach Variogon multi-focus lens that can zoom up to 10 times (3X optical and 3.3X digital) to long-distance shots.

It also comes with standard settings and features such as digital video capture, five modes of settings and software for your PC that organizes pictures for simple searching. The retail price: P29,900.

Canon S50

Next is the Canon PowerShot S50. This is a relatively more expensive digital camera because it has a 5-megapixel image resolution.

But unlike the Kodak LS633, the photo quality of this digital camera is superior since, of course, it can snap up higher resolution images.

A successor of the Canon S45, the S50 comes with other standard features including an improved movie mode and a host of manual and automatic settings that would get any shutterbug excited.

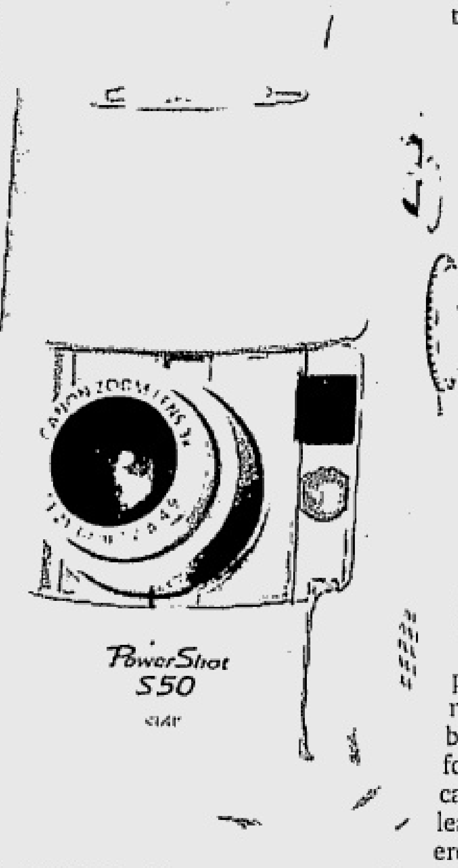
For hobbyists or even professional photographers, the S50 offers flexibility in taking shots. You can play around with the manual controls or just let the camera think for you with its automatic settings.

However, this digital camera is not as user-friendly as the LS633. One has to get used to the multiple buttons, and relatively complicated menus within the digital camera's system. Nonetheless, with such complexity comes flexibility. From close-up to landscape photos, this camera delivers the high quality that it promises and does justice to the Canon name.

Shooting modes available include automatic, shutter priority, aperture priority, manual, and custom.

It also comes with the standard "scene" modes: landscape, portrait, night scene, fast shutter, slow shutter, stitch assist, and movie mode. Similar to the Kodak LS633, you can also adjust the color settings for sepia, vivid colors, neutral colors, and black and white.

The S50's display, a 1.8-inch "low-temperature polycrystalline silicon TFT color," however, is not as clear and bright as the Kodak LS633.



The best feature: the Canon S50 supports compact flash memory cards, which is by far the most affordable memory card technology. This feature alone provides the most attractive proposition for consumers. Why? The digital camera is as good as the memory it offers.

Providing expandable memory is one thing but offering an affordable memory card should at least be considered by digital camera manufacturers. That is, however, if they are willing to part with their P37,888.

Olympus C-750

Finally we check out the Olympus C-750. Supporting 4 megapixels of image resolution, this digital camera stands out from the rest (well, at least the two other digital cameras that I've tried).

The C-750 features a nice lens that can zoom up to 40 times (combined both optical and digital zoom), allowing for great telephoto shooting. It also comes with a remote control, a hot shoe (for connecting external flashes) and a price tag of P27,650.

The Olympus brand also offers the same flexibility like the Canon S50 and the ease-of-use of the Kodak LS633.

Downside: The C-750 supports a different memory card media called xD-picture card, which is not commonly sold in retail stores. For this review, the xD picture card provided 16 megabytes of additional memory.

In terms of quality of shots, the C-750 produces crisp shots that can be saved in different formats including ".TIFF."

Olympus, however, lacks the auto-focus-assist lamp (usually using infrared). Thus, auto-focusing on subject takes some time and a little effort.

The 1.5-inch display is also smaller and less sophisticated than that of the Kodak LS633. Still, the images on the display are bright and fluid. Viewing outdoors is a bit difficult, though.

Some additional features: the C-750 differs from the two other brands. While it is considered pocket-size, it is a bit bulky and yet light considering the casing is metal. Even so, the digital camera bundle comes with a neck strap, a lens cap and even a camera case for protection. Its ergonomic body also allows for easy grasping, particularly for Asians with relatively smaller hands.

The camera bundle that I got from local distributor Axis Global Technologies came with four non-rechargeable NiMH AA batteries, which I believe is the product's downside. But I read that the standard package comes with rechargeable batteries plus an "overnight" battery recharger.

The camera's software works with Windows XP or Mac OS X, providing editing tools, such as red-eye reduction and the like.

The digital camera also comes with a pop-up flash. With a push of a little lever, the flash pops up literally. When you don't want to use the flash, just replace the flash. Other digital cameras still require you to go through a menu to turn the flash on and off.

The camera is also easy to use. Focusing is controlled by a lever wrapped around the shutter button. Going through the menus and settings of the camera is also simple. Changing aperture and shutter speeds is accessible via its electronic viewfinder.

Overall, the Olympus C-750 is perhaps the digital camera that fits my purpose and taste. Not that the other brands were not good, but they did not meet my expectations as a consumer.

Here's a tip: the next time you stop by a retail shop, try out the digital cameras first before you decide on buying one. Your taste might be different from other people.

So follow the tips I gave you, but in the end, you're the best judge of what you're buying.

Just don't shoot me!

InfoTech

E-mail: pr_info_tech@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Leo Magno

Smart, ABS-CBN reach 'tentative' SMS revenue-share agreement

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

"TENTATIVE" agreements have been reached between mobile operator Smart Communications Inc. and broadcast firm ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., a Smart official said.

Both companies are now negotiating for a new revenue-sharing scheme for the "text" or short messaging system (SMS) service partnership involving web- and television-based programs, said Ramon Isberto, head of Smart's public affairs.

While the "discussions are not yet over," Isberto said that there has been progress covering most of the services under the latest "tentative" agreement.

"We're now in the process of finalizing the agreement," the executive added, saying that the actual signing of any deal with the broadcast firm has yet to take place.

Last month, a dispute erupted between ABS-CBN and Smart over revenue-sharing agreements on SMS-based interactive games and promotions that were running on the broadcast firm's programs.

Reports indicated that ABS-CBN had threatened to scrap its partnership with Smart, as the latter was pushing to standardize its revenue-sharing scheme with different companies, including the broadcast firm.

SMART/B15

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ICT Commission nears approval

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is close to signing an executive order creating the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) commission, according to a government IT official.

The revised draft of the executive order is now with the executive secretary awaiting the President's signature, said Information Technology and E-commerce Council (ITECC) executive director Virgilio Peña.

Peña previously hinted that the ICT Commission would likely be created within August.

A technical working group set up by the ITECC has been working on the draft executive order for over a month after it submitted its final recommendations in July to the President.

Once the President signs the executive order, the technical working group, with help from the ITECC, has

ICT/B15

PHILLIPS

Oracle harnesses grid computing in next product

By Leo Magno

ORACLE Corp. is updating its flagship database product by becoming the first software firm to adopt the concept of grid computing as commercially available software.

ORACLE/B15

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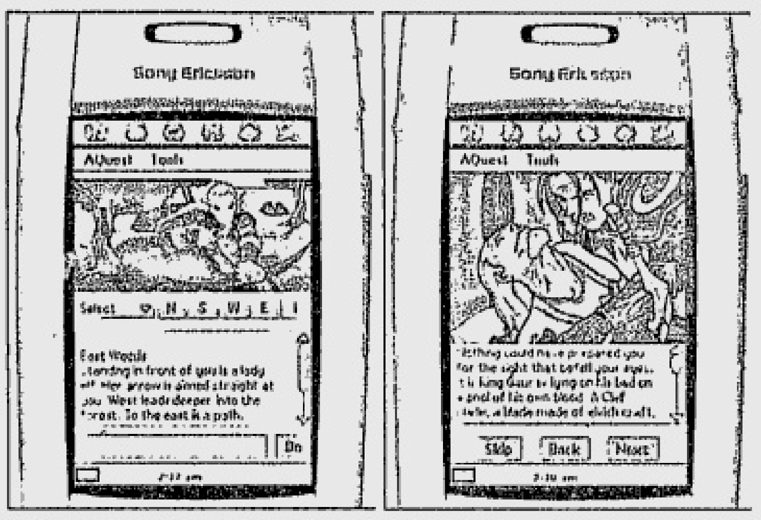


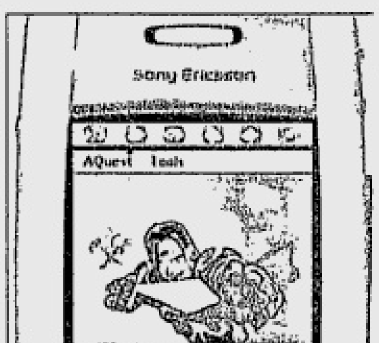
THE BIGGEST challenge faced by the developers of Aramith's Quest: The Summoning was to keep the game size small while maintaining visual impact on such a limited screen.

Award-winning Filipino game now in Sony Ericsson P800

SWORDS and spells and a dangerous journey will keep adventurers busy on their Sony Ericsson P800 as "Aramith's Quest: The Summoning," the award-winning interactive game from ePLDT, now comes for free with the Sony Ericsson P800.

Current P800 users can visit the Sony Ericsson booth at Rustan's Department Stores in Metro Manila, as well as the Sony Ericsson interactive stations in Memo Express SM Megamall and North Edsa, to have the game installed for free.

ePLDT developed the action and adventure fiction game for the mobile platform as an entry to Sony Ericsson's global challenge to develop original applications for the P800, Sony Ericsson's flagship mobile multimedia communications product.



The P800 features a built-in digital camera, a large full color touch screen with stylus, high speed Internet access, triple band access, a video and audio player, PDA features, Bluetooth, infrared and USB connectivity and flight mode for use on a plane. Its PDA functions can also be synchronized with common PC applications, making the P800 virtually a mini mobile computer.

The game "Aramith's Quest" won along with other applications from Germany, Russia, United States, Sweden, Finland, France and Thailand. Entries from around the world were judged on their innovativeness, practicality and "coolness" factor.

"It took three weeks to design and develop the game. Much of the time was spent developing the actual code. We didn't have much time and resources to add bells and whistles, but the final software was very much like how we planned it to be—simple and concise," said ePLDT ContentDev head Buddy del Rosario.

His team includes former Filipino Cartoons artist Anton Gustilo, who handled overall game design and art production with Leomar Valiao, a GD designer into martial arts and music. Content engineers Elmer Andes Jr., a PC game and animé enthusiast and Rick Emerson Ong, who enjoys bowling and the stock market, tackled programming. With their combined interests in movies and reading, the team set out to create a strong narrative for the game.

"The old adventure games in the PC, where Aramith's Quest was based on, are perfect for mobile handsets because they're small in code size and fun to play. We took advantage of the fact that nobody had ever done this type of game for a mobile phone before," Del Rosario added. "We also took a chance that those who can afford the P800 are probably the ones who played Zork and old Lucas Arts back in the '80s and would appreciate the nostalgia."

Developing a game for the mobile platform rather than the standard PC presented them with the challenges of smaller memory and screen area plus having to deal with a different input device like the P800's stylus and keypad.

"Our biggest challenge was to keep the game size small while maintaining visual impact on such a limited screen," he said.

ePLDT's Content Development Group actually specializes in web design and application development for which it has gained industry recognition. Joining the Sony Ericsson competition with just a month to go and against the rest of the world at that, the team actually did not expect to win.

"Coming from the web, this is a new medium for us to play with. Even if we didn't win, we had learned a lot and that would help us in our future game development stints," Del Rosario said.

BUSINESS Monday
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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

PARTICULARLY ON THE SHOP FLOOR

There's always room for improvement

By Nelia A. Embisan
Contributor

MANY manufacturing small and medium enterprises in the growth stage suffer from problems in production.

Problems are likely focused on inability to deliver goods on time, inability to adhere to product quality standards, and soaring cost of production which is often passed on to the customer.

These problems imply bottlenecks in the production area, the "heart and soul" of a manufacturing enterprise. What is tragic is that, when customer demands are not satisfied, the customer begins to hold a negative image of the company which can spread like wild fire among other customers.

Study and improve

As early as possible, an enterprise must study and improve its production methods once danger signals become imminent—and do it fast before the problems escalate.

The most widely used and safest approach to higher productivity is through work study and work measurement. Both are used to study and examine human work in all its context.

Work study in earlier times was known as "time and motion" study. These two areas include the whole field of methods engineering. The fundamental objective of methods engineering is to improve working methods by economizing movement of both materials and workers. The result is improvement in design and better utilization of both plant and materials.

Work study is a tedious process with particular attention on detail. Briefly, it determines how the job should be done, how long it should take and how much it is worth.

Procedure

Work study can be applied through following these patterns.

1. Selecting an important job to be studied

2. Select a job with a large volume of difficult operations which provide the opportunity for considerable and gainful improvement.

What kind of job should it be? A job that uses high in-process time? One that is a production bottleneck? Or one that requires more people? In short, it should be anything that wastes time, energy, material and labor.

3. Breaking a job and recording every detail

Take note that the success of the whole procedure depends largely on the accuracy achieved in recording what is taking place on the job. And this means everything. Every little detail should be listed down.

The recording techniques employed vary according to the nature of the action being studied. The principal types used are process charts, diagrams and bar charts. Photographs are sometimes used. For the fine detail studies, a diagram or model of a plant layout may be prepared to trace the path of movement of man, material and equipment.

Needless to say, the more detailed recording techniques call for more time and effort on the part of the work study officer.

Questioning with an open mind

With a detailed record of a particular task available, it is now possible to take a critical examination of the whole process. This takes the form of a systematic analysis of the purpose, place, sequence, person and means used at every stage of the operation. The following questions should be answered:

What is achieved? Why is it necessary? Where is it done? Why there? When is it done? Why then? By when is it done? Why (that person)? How is it done? Why (that person)? How is it done? Why that way?

In conducting the critical examination and using the processes, the work study officer will have to make full use of the specialist advice available, both inside and outside the organization. In this way, methods can be adopted by which there can be complete assurance that they are not only economically sound and technically correct, but are also based on sound physiological and psychological principles. Above all, they make a positive contribution to the value of the product or service provided.

4. Developing an improvement proposal

This is the result of job breakdown, charting and questioning. It requires ingenuity, imagination and logical thinking. Specifically, it is here that an open mind is important. The choice of the best method and the proposal for the elimination of unnecessary steps or combining of others are part of the development of the improved method.

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What does 'Joseph The Dreamer' have to do with CEOs

MAPping the Future

By Franco G. del Rosario

THE ONLY real wealth is found in new ideas and somebody willing to act on it. Every good leader is also a learner. The 2nd Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) International CEO Conference is for men and women that take action on new ideas and apply them to their lives.

With the theme "New Ideas to Oust Old Mindsets," this conference is scheduled for Nov. 4th at the Makati Shangri-La. Friends, you do not want to miss this. We have assembled a lineup of speakers that started out with new ideas and all have stories to share that CEOs can use in their business and everyday life.

For starters, considering most of us do business in Asia, it is appropriate to have the chairman of Asia of McKinsey & Co. as the keynote speaker. Mr. Hsieh is not only the worldwide McKinsey's organization and leadership practice leader but he also sits in Mckinsey's directors' committee.

There is no one more qualified to speak on new ideas as Mr. Hsieh as he is known to his clients as an innovative thinker. He has guided North American and Asian clients to grow in new ways, helping them connect with partners.

CEOs and boards call on him to counsel leaders on transition agenda and on their leadership approach.

So why is the morning session entitled "If Joseph Can Dream It, So Can You"? CEOs would want to listen to Joey Gurango and Cecilio Pedro. You would want to hear how they abandoned old mindsets to have their dreams come to pass. They will be joined by Rico Hizon, Journalist-Asia Business Report, British Broadcasting Corp. as moderator.

We may not realize that the story of Joseph contains principles that will help us succeed personally and in business.

Joseph was envied by his brothers as he was Jacob's favorite son to whom was given the coat of many colors, a symbol of favor and affection. Joseph had a dream from God that all would bow down to him—first the sheaves in the field, and later the "sun, the moon and the 11 stars."

In his excitement he shared it with his brothers. This obviously angered his brothers even more. The brothers conspired to kill him, threw him in a ditch and left him for dead and sold him into slavery.

It would have been easy for Joseph to give up on his dream, but he held on to it in spite of his circumstance.

Eventually, he was brought into Egypt, into the house of one of the Pharaoh's officials, Potiphar. As God was with Joseph, Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his entire household.

Things were working out for Joseph, until Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him and Joseph fled from her. For holding on to his integrity, he ended up being thrown into jail!

Ending up in prison for doing the right thing may be the breaking point for some of us to give up on our dream. But Joseph held on to his dream. The Pharaoh was troubled by dreams that he had been having. When he heard about Joseph's ability to interpret dreams, he sent for Joseph. He successfully interpreted the Pharaoh's dreams—saving the entire nation from famine.

Pharaoh rewarded Joseph by making him the prime minister of Egypt, the richest country in the world. When the famine spread to Canaan, his brothers came not knowing who he was and bowed before him, begging for food.

Joseph's dream had come to pass and he saved his family from the famine all because he held on to his dream.

How does this apply to us business people? We all have our dreams and ambitions. But, in trying economic times, we tend to let go of our dream. However, just like in Joseph, if our dream is God-given, then nothing can stand in its way. Some examples of the many similarities with the story of Joseph to business people today are as follows:

Conformity—As Joseph acquired the look of an Egyptian, his brothers did not recognize him when they were driven to Egypt by the famine. Externally, although Joseph had fit in so well looking like an Egyptian, he still had the spirit of God inside him.

There are many people in the business world that conform to the norms of business, but do not do so at the expense of giving up the spirit of God in us. For example, they keep their integrity at all times; just as Joseph did when he fled from Potiphar's wife.

Tests of leadership—In business, one of the tests of leadership is to exact vengeance on people. While Joseph's brothers realized that the brother they betrayed was now in a position to put them to death, Joseph went through an important change—he freed himself of all resentment and bitterness as he forgave his brothers.

In fact, Joseph must have forgiven his brothers until he had completely forgotten, which happens only when one has gotten over the hurt. Joseph prayed for God's grace that he can no longer remember. It came from God alone. It's not something Joseph could have done by himself. God put it in him. It is a gift from God and it set Joseph free!

Personal humility—Joseph's dream led him to be humble which saw him through his sufferings and made it possible for him to do what God has caused him to do. Even when he was already prime minister he was still modest.

Professional will—What got Joseph through the several painful years was the satisfaction of doing what he had to do with excellence. Jim Collins, author of the bestseller "Built To Last—Successful Habits of Visionary Companies" in his latest bestseller "Good To Great" arrived at only 11 companies that he considers as great companies.

These 11 firms generated cumulative stock returns, beat the general stock market by an average of seven times in 15 years! In Jim Collins' study he formulated a five-level hierarchy of executive capabilities, with Level 5 at the top. He found every good-to-great company has a Level 5 leader. Below in Jim Collins' words is how he explains Level 5 leaders.

1) "Level 5 leaders embody a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will."

2) "Level 5 leaders display a compelling modesty, self-effacing and understated."

3) "Level 5 leaders are fanatically driven, infected with an incurable need to produce results."

4) "Level 5 leaders display a workmanlike diligence."

I believe we can all agree that by Jim Collins' definition, Joseph was a Level 5 leader. Joseph went from the most powerless person to the most powerful person in the country and remained humble and modest. (The reverse can happen as well, as we have seen in this country.)

What we can learn from Joseph's life is, in our journey, there will be hurdles along the way. But God will come up the "breaks" for us. We may win some, lose some but in the end we cannot fail if it is God's dream for us!

Differentiation—This is a very popular business concept. But the people that succeed in business are the men and women that are so different and people just can't figure out exactly what it is but they just sense it. What they are sensing is a divine spirit of God in these people. Becoming the prime minister and saving Egypt was not all that difficult for Joseph as God was working inside of him.

Key success factors—The same key factors that made Joseph a success are the same ones that make successful business people today. Joseph succeeded because:

1) he had a calling by God to go to Egypt (he didn't go there to make a fortune)

2) he held on to his dream from God

3) God's spirit was in him

4) he had godly character (professional will, personal humility, excellence, integrity, among others)

If there are some of you reading this article that are going through what appears to be a "prison" right now and shouting in the inside, "What is happening to my life?; Why is this happening to me?" This set of success factors may prove helpful. We learn from Joseph's story that there are great blessings for those that follow their call.

This may mean launching out into our own "Egypts" and walking through "prisons" and standing before some "Pharaohs." Just as we saw with Joseph, responding to the call, comes a valuable gift from God. Let us not spend our time looking for the "Pharaohs" but for the "Josephs."

If we find the "Josephs," let's do whatever we can to get them to the "Egypts" they are called to and watch them change the world for the better! Going back to Jim Collins, he says, "I believe that potential Level 5 leaders exist all around us, if we just know what to look for, and that many people have the potential to evolve into Level 5."

Joseph's dream was of God. Is ours? God had given all of us a dream and if we let God be in control, He will let it come to pass; as he did for Joseph. It's not that the price of doing what God has called us to but rather can we afford the price we pay for missing it—when we stand before God and He says, "Well, you missed it! You did not live the life I created for you to live." Would we not rather hear the Lord tell us "well done my good and faithful servant!"?

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, Nov. 4th, at the Makati Shangri-La. Bring your friends to this conference and your friends will be grateful as they along with you will reap a harvest of growth, blessing and enrichment. See you there!

(The author is chair of the MAP CEO Conference Committee, chair of Sharexchange Brokers and managing consultant of Six Sigma Consulting. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph.)

Tech investors smiling at rally driven by hope

SAN FRANCISCO—Growth in computer hardware and software sales is tepid, technology executives are hesitant to predict a recovery, and layoffs and a weak dollar are about the only real drivers of profit growth.

In other words, it's been a very good time to be a technology investor.

From the doldrums of February to the peaks of July, shares of technology stocks rose roughly 40 percent, and in some cases doubled, despite little evidence of a long hoped-for recovery in technology sales.

Through the end of July, the Nasdaq 100, something of a barometer for technology stocks, outperformed the broader Standard & Poor's 500 index by 12 percent, according to Thomson First Call.

A few weeks ago, the momentum disappeared and stocks have been holding for about a month at slightly lower levels.

Hope, it seems, can only drive technology

TECH/ B2-4

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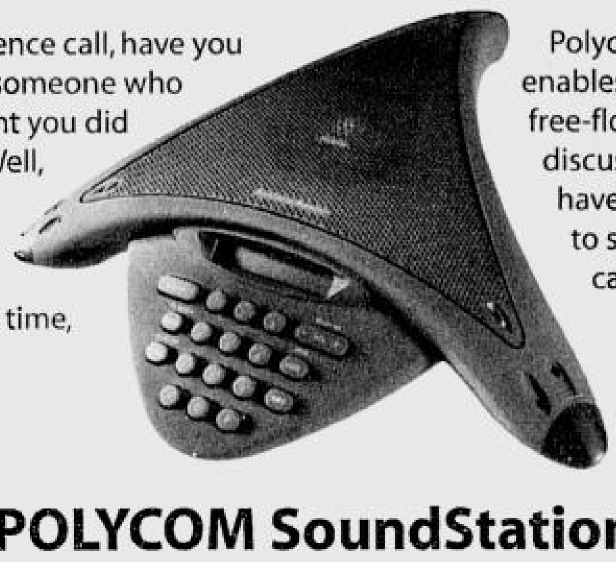

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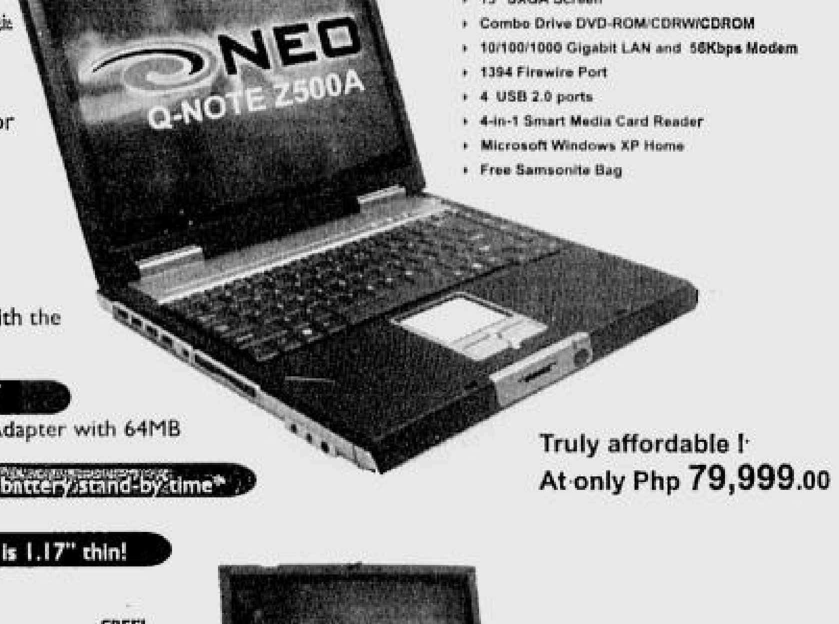

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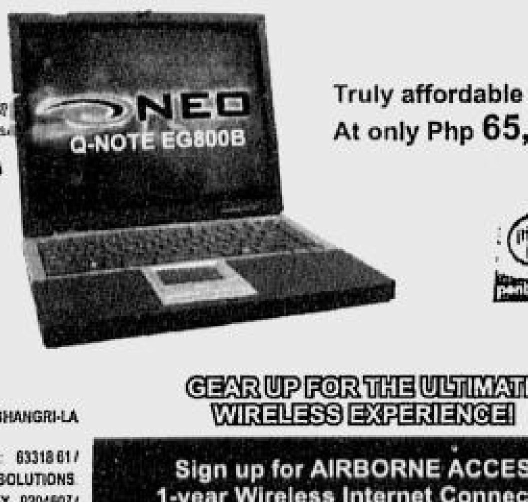

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Public wants more corporate responsibility

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

THE LOGIC follows the saying about teaching a man to fish. Give coins to a street kid, and the money helps provide his meal. But give to a general pool, and you help set up a school and feeding center for street children.

It makes sense to donate to huge funds that are used to build social projects.

Member corporations of the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) work in unison for such ends. They each pledge to donate one percent of their net income for social development projects. Of this amount, 60 percent will go to PBSP, while 40 percent will support their individual projects.

Funding pro-poor projects

In 2002, PBSP channeled P 366.9 million in financial assistance to fund 245 projects. These programs affected 255,000 households.

For example, PBSP, Citibank Foundation, and the Rotary Club of Quezon City funded a computer laboratory in Krus na Ligas High School. As a result, the school now offers computer training to their 4th year students.

"Our graduates last year immediately found jobs that entailed computer programming," said its principal, Dr. Levita U. Ramos. "Their familiarity with basic information technology has also made it easier for them to go to college."

The ratio of their high school graduates who went on to college has doubled.

Few involved in development

PBSP wanted to look into public demand for corporate social responsibility, so it commissioned some questions to ride on a Social Weather Stations survey. The module was part of the SWS national poll of March 10-25, 2003.

Here are some results.

"In your opinions, how many private corporations in the Philippines, local or foreign, have social projects, or projects for the development of the country?"

All of the corporations	1%
Most of the corporations	14
Few of the corporations	25
None of the corporations	60

It really is your duty

"What can you say about the following which a corporation can do? They SHOULD DO IT / they should DO IT IF THEY CAN/, or it is NOT THEIR OBLIGATION?"

Voluntarily increase the wages of employees according to the increase in prices of basic commodities.

Should do it	68%
Do it if they can	27
Not their obligation	5

Voluntarily spend for cleaning or for restoring damage to the environment.

Should do it	58%
Do it if they can	36
Not their obligation	6

Voluntarily send volunteers from the corporation to a community to help in tree planting, construction of houses, or teach selected courses to out of school youth.

Should do it	57%
Do it if they can	38
Not their obligation	5

Voluntarily give substantial donations to the poor or to communities in need.

Should do it	56%
Do it if they can	39
Not their obligation	5

In short, the public wanted more corporate social responsibility.

Most involved companies

Those who were aware of corporations with social projects were asked to identify them. This was an open-ended question: no answers were pre-listed, and multiple replies were allowed. The companies seen to have the most social projects were:

San Miguel	19%
Jollibee	3
ABS-CBN	3
Meralco	3
Coca-Cola	2
Nestle	2
Purefoods	2
Unilever	2
Ayala Life	2
PLDT	1
GMA 7	1
Foremost Farm	1
RFM	1
Aboitiz	1
Petron	1
Globe	1
Smart	1
McDonald's	1
Bantay Bata 163	1
Alaska	1
Milo	1
Dole Philippines	1
Ayala Group of Companies	1

In past SWS surveys, San Miguel was also the most frequently cited company for social projects. The corresponding awareness ratios were 18 percent in November 1994, and 34 percent in March 1995. *Comments to (darroyo@philonline.com).*

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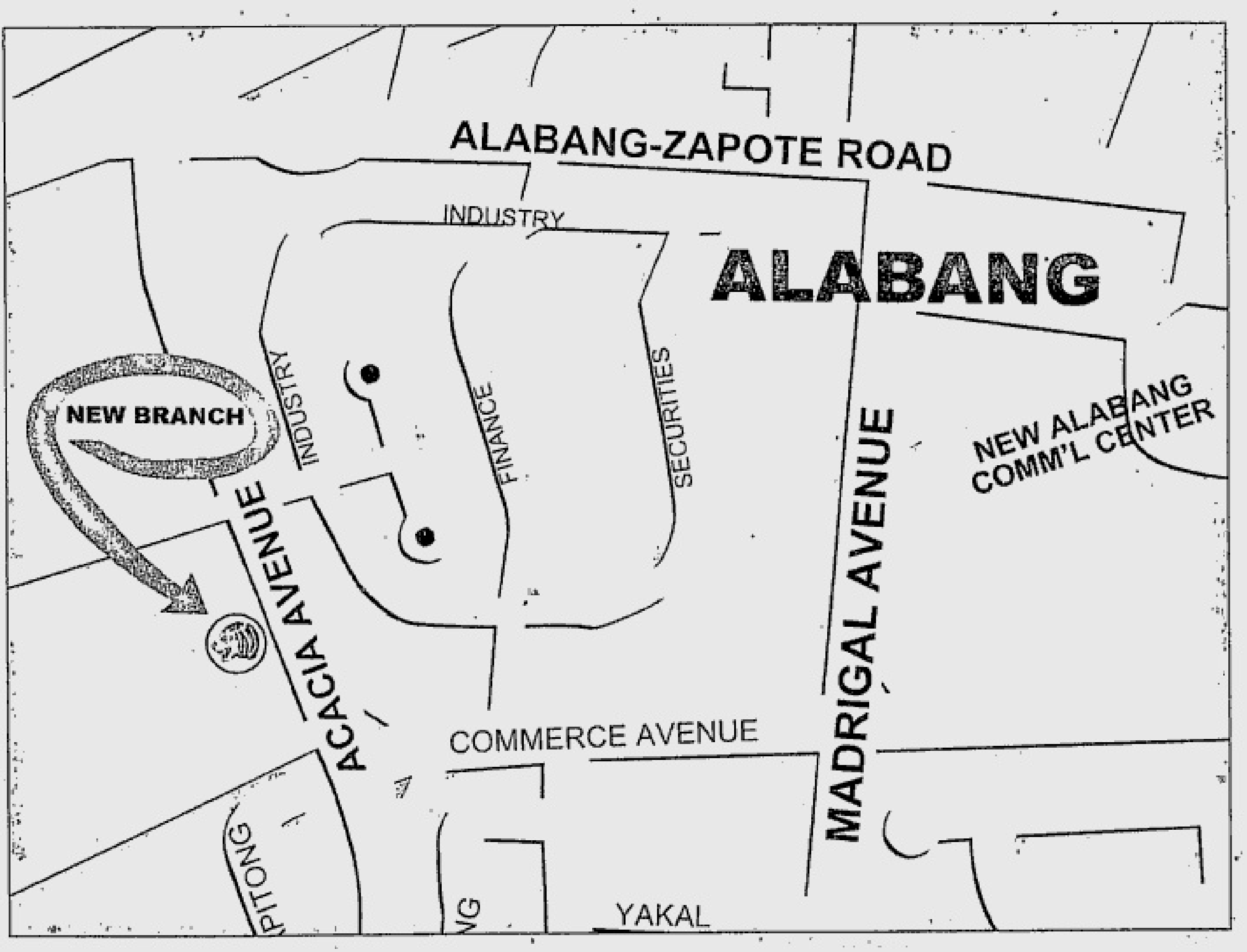

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How do I make apologies for my boss' behavior

GOODNESS GRACES

Lia S. Bernardo

Q: AT a business lunch with a very important client, my boss lost his temper. The waiter failed to give him this steak well done. It was served too raw and I guess the sight of blood really offended him. Although he was extremely rude to the waiter and could be heard by all as he was shouting, the waiter managed to pacify him, but the damage had been done because the client heard this whole interaction.

How do I now make apologies for my boss' behavior?

A: How people react to situations is a reflection of who they really are as people. Client or no client, your boss was wrong in losing his temper. He could have simply asked for his steak to be changed. I would advice you to call your client and apologize for the incident that occurred, not specifically to apologize for your boss' behavior, which will already be understood without you specifically mentioning your boss. Although apologizing is the proper thing to do, I wouldn't count on it in saving a business relationship. Be prepared to accept the fact that your client may take his business elsewhere.

Q: My husband is not so familiar with formal table manners. We are supposed to attend a company dinner wherein our spouses are invited. How do I subtly teach my husband what to do as I know he will be offended?

A: I would explain to him that although it doesn't really matter to you, you would like him to be comfortable as well during the dinner. Explain to him that if he is uncomfortable or if others become uncomfortable due to his actions, this may affect how your colleagues see you in the future. Hopefully he will understand. You have to make it clear however that you are doing this not because you are ashamed of him. Another option would be, if you have children, particularly teenagers, teach them the proper way to eat at a formal dinner setting at home. You can do this during meal time, using a home cooked meal. Have them practice eating chicken with a fork and knife and using their table napkin and teach them which utensil to use with what dish. This way he could be present and indirectly pick up some tips while you teach your kids.

(Feedback at etiquetteconsultants@hotmail.com)

Tech investors ...

From page B2-2

stocks up so far, and investors are demanding strong revenue growth before turning more bullish on technology issues.

"It wasn't a secret that there wasn't a ton of fundamental change," said Marty Shagrin, who analyzes technology stocks for Victory Capital Management, which has $63 billion in assets under management. "Valuations got rich, and you had a lot of stocks up 30, 40, 50 percent."

Semiconductor stocks, among the hardest hit of any in the technology sector, have returned to one-year highs, even as executives have stuck to only cautious projections of a recovery in a three-year business slump.

Computer hardware companies saw their stocks rise by nearly half. While computer sales did rise in the second quarter, the top personal computer seller, Dell Inc., waved off proclamations of a return to 1990's style growth.

"I will certainly tell you that there is increased optimism among CEOs and large companies, but I don't really want to characterize it too strongly," Michael Dell, the co-founder and chief of the company, said on a conference call after Dell's earnings report on Thursday. *Reuters*

Baguio's restos rediscover Cordillera's ancient recipes

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—When Paul Poblador first took a bite from a native chicken, cooked in ritual fashion into the Igorot delicacy called pinikpikan, his only description for it was apt: "Smokin'!"

"I meant pinikpikan chicken had a smoky taste to it. There was something very raw about it, but it had character," explained Poblador, owner and chef of the Baguio-based restaurant "Salud! Bistro."

Like many new Baguio migrants, Poblador had to sample some of Baguio's side street recipes, which have been drawing too many curious souls from Metro Manila for decades.

Exotic dishes with names like etag (preserved meat) and sinursor (a seafood meal) have drawn curious gourmands to Baguio.

These are items no one really sees displayed prominently in Baguio's meat markets, however.

"We've heard about pinikpikan and food dined during canao (ritual feasts) but we didn't really dare ourselves to test them for ourselves. But we know there is a good market for them. I see tourists sitting along (the turo-turo district of the Baguio slaughterhouse area) chewing on pinikpikan," said Gerry Beltran, vice president of the Baguio Association of Hotels and Inns (Bahai).

That one bite may be a new land mine for the city's bustling food circuit. Poblador, Beltran and Bahai president Janine Chan have made ancient Cordillera recipes as the new foundation for the third "Baguio Tossed Salad Festival" in September.

Beltran said Bahai's member-restaurants want to see how the local market will receive these exotic recipes.

But the current market for pinikpikan, dog meat stew and canao delicacies is "doing just fine," said Jen Aquilet, a sociologist who started gathering authentic recipes of Kalinga, Apayao, Bontoc and Ibaloi cuisine in 2000.

To date, the city and its surrounding areas have around 20 major restaurants and at least 40 eateries which offer grilled or stewed canao fare to a growing market of tourists.

The standard clientele had been Baguio and Benguet residents, most of whom have roots in the Cordillera.

A restaurant-owner, who specializes in dog meat stew, said the collective yearly revenue of all these pinikpikan eateries would reach P20 million, largely because of the "underground nature" of these meals.

THE NORTH'S famous pinikpikan EV ESPIRITU

"Their (intrinsic) attraction are the stories behind their cooking," Aquilet explained.

Pinikpikan chicken is perhaps the more accessible to strangers because its principal story, she said, is a chicken hung upside down and "killed slowly" by multiple beatings to curdle the blood.

Like most ritual animals, the chicken is then burned whole, feathers and all, using a blowtorch or over a blazing bonfire. The toasted carcass is then peeled slowly, is divided up into chunks, and is tossed into a steaming broth filled with sayote slices, salt, pepper and sometimes ginger.

The process may sound unpalatable, said Aquilet, but the curdled blood provides the meal with its smoky taste.

Restaurateurs are no longer expected to ritually kill these animals. A few stalls at the Baguio market already sell pinikpikan-broiled chicken for P80 a kilogram.

Genuine Cordillera dishes, she said, are protein rich, with a tangy, sweet-sour aftertaste.

"In a culture that developed far from the sea, the tribes had to develop their own way of developing tasty and yet well-preserved meals," Aquilet said.

"For example, (older tribes in Mountain Province, Balbalan town in Kalinga and Abra) did not have salt, so meat was smoked and then buried underground for weeks to draw that salty tang. It sounds gruesome, I know, but the villages got very tasty meals we now identify as etag, the Igorot ham," she said.

"I grew up with etag hanging from our kitchen (in Mountain Province). Of course, by that time, we were using salt to preserve the meat, but the taste still needed to be nurtured by displaying the meat to the elements," she said. Etag in the city market can go for P70 a kilogram.

Both etag and pinikpikan merely scratch the surface of the Cordillera's ancient cuisine.

Sinursor, from the villages near the Apayao River, could easily be marketed at P1,200, Aquilet said.

Sinursor refers to green peppers, seasoning, prawns, shellfish, crabs and fish that are steamed, while sealed inside a bamboo trunk.

Like most of their Apayao recipes, the villagers suggest storing the bamboo-encased sinursor for weeks to allow the ingredients to ferment. "The taste is a mixture of salty sourness and sweet meat," Aquilet said.

Igorot food is not too strange for most Northern Luzon folk.

Ilocos cuisine also has blood sausages, which most Ibalois and Kankanaeys call "pinuneg." But unlike the mainstream dishes, Igorot pinuneg is derived from ritual killing or ritual feasts.

Aquilet once tried to use Igorot recipes in her cookies sold in her shop, the Cookie Corner. Her P20,000 investment in 1999 marketed oven-baked "spice cookies," which were flavored with camote (sweet potato), lemons, pumpkins, garlic, and surprisingly, red peppers.

Beltran said their interest in these ancient recipes is "academic for the moment."

"We are asking universities to prepare these recipes or their own variation for one day of the festival. We had always focused on the vegetables Benguet (and Mountain Province) produce when we embarked on our largest tossed salad events, yet at the back of our minds, we knew we needed to pursue the region's body of cuisine," Beltran said.

Telecom execs 'hub' nob with Arturo Luz

GLOBE retail marketing head Raya Roa-Gonzalez with JimenezBasic CEO Abby Jimenez

GLOBE Telecom's top executives were seen hobnobbing with National Artist Arturo Luz at the Hub where the artist's latest abstract collection was unveiled as part of the Hub's Sensory Indulgence campaign that celebrates technology through a multi-sensory experience that includes art, music and fine food.

Luz, describing the 15-piece collection as a "deviation from recognizable images," also said that he explore[s] states of mind and feelings through a vocabulary of pure lines, color, shape and tone. The results are spontaneous, free and dynamic.

The Hub by Globe Telecom is the retail launch pad of the latest phones and mobile technology where the techno-curious can go and sample the features of the phones on display. "Globe communicates through innovative technology; I communicate through visual imagery. My abstractions feel at home in this environment," Luz added.

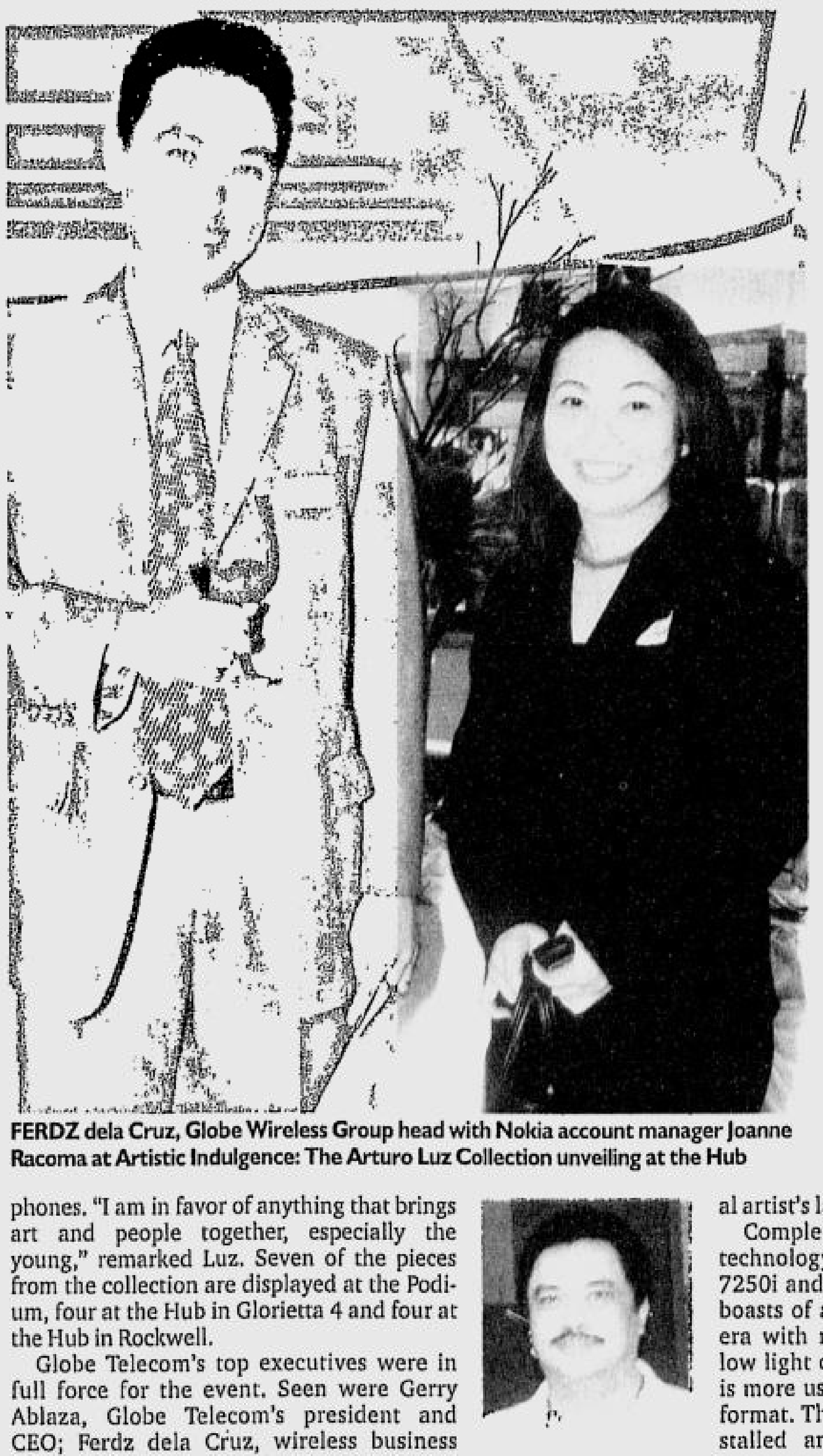
Three of the paintings from the collection have also been reproduced as wallpaper and can be downloaded onto MMS-capable phones. "I am in favor of anything that brings art and people together, especially the young," remarked Luz. Seven of the pieces from the collection are displayed at the Podium, four at the Hub in Glorietta 4 and four at the Hub in Rockwell.

Globe Telecom's top executives were in full force for the event. Seen were Gerry Ablaza, Globe Telecom's president and CEO; Ferdz dela Cruz, wireless business group head, Lizanne Uychaco, head of wireless sales and distribution; Andrew Buay, chief operations advisor; Dodo Reyes, head of media and advertising; Raya Roa-Gonzalez, head of retail marketing; Vicky Tan-Yao, headk-0.1 of handsets and cards management; Fino Ruiz, head of VAS. Nokia's country manager Parikshit Bhasin and Nokia head for product marketing Jouni Halme were also on hand to appreciate the national artist's latest abstract series.

Completing the celebration of art and technology was the launching of the Nokia 7250i and Observation Camera. The 7250i boasts of an advanced integrated CIF-camera with night-mode for taking photos in low light conditions, portrait imaging, and is more user-friendly with its menu in grid format. The Observation Camera can be installed anywhere—in the house, office, garage, or in this case, in the art room or personal art gallery. By simply sending an SMS command to the unit, the Observation Camera will take a photo of the location and send the image information to the user's MMS-enabled phone.

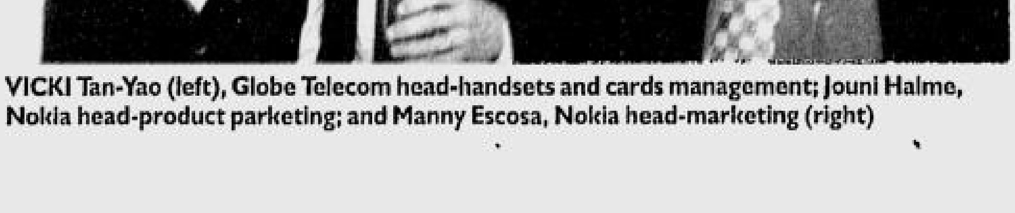
The Arturo Luz abstract collection will be on view from Aug. 15 to Sept. 15 at Hub stores at the Podium, Rockwell Power Plant and Glorietta.

(From left) NOKIA country general manager Parikshit Bhasin, ANC news anchor and event host Pinky Webb and and Globe Telecom president and CEO Gerry Ablaza


FERDZ dela Cruz, Globe Wireless Group head with Nokia account manager Joanne Racoma at Artistic Indulgence: The Arturo Luz Collection unveiling at the Hub

LIZANNE Uychaco, Globe Telecom Wireless, sales and distribution head

ANDREW Buay, Globe Telecom chief operations advisor


VICKI Tan-Yao (left), Globe Telecom head-handsets and cards management; Jouni Halme, Nokia head-product parketing; and Manny Escosa, Nokia head-marketing (right)

DODO Reyes, Globe Telecom head-media and advertising

Meralco cited in PBSP social development survey

THE MANILA Electric Company (Meralco) was cited in a survey conducted by the Social Weather Station (SWS) as among the top private corporations in the country that conduct projects for social development.

The survey, commissioned by the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) to profile the Filipino's attitude, insights and opinions on corporate social responsibility or corporate citizenship, was made public in the recently concluded Corporate Social Responsibility Week Expo at the PICC last July 9-11. It was conducted last March 10 to 15, through face-to-face interviews of a national sample of 1,200 voting age adults.

Forty percent of the respondents said they are aware of private corporations with social projects; 25 percent said there are only a few; 14 percent said most corporations have community programs; and one percent said all corporations have such projects.

San Miguel Corp. was the most known to have social projects, having been mentioned by 19 percent of those aware of corporations' CSR efforts. Meralco was tied at second with ABS-CBN and Jollibee who were mentioned by three percent of the respondents who were aware of private companies' social projects. Coke, Nestlé, Purefoods, Unilever and Ayala Life placed third with two percent of respondents saying these companies have social projects.

"We are truly honored by the results of the survey. We never imagined that with all the controversies that surrounded Meralco these past months and considering our social projects are highly dependent on volunteerism among our employees, our CSR efforts would still have this much impact on the people. This definitely inspires us to work even harder and have more projects for social and national development," says Manuel M. Lopez, Meralco chair and CEO.

A key project of Meralco's CSR Office is the Teacher Education Project under its Community Sponsorship Program. Believing that education is an essential ingredient to national development and that teachers are the key to quality education, Meralco provides free computer training and seminars on 5S and the concept of multiple intelligence to secondary public school teachers. Computer training consists of lectures and hands on practice in Microsoft's Windows, Word and Excel, and basic Internet usage. 5S, which stands for sort, systematize, sweep, standardize, self-discipline, is a concept of organized cleanliness. Aside from the seminars, Meralco also donates computers and printers to recipient schools to ensure that the teachers have the tools to practice what they have learned in the training program.

In the past three years, the Teacher Education Project has been brought to 340 public school teachers from several public high schools in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

FRIO MIXX
FRIO MIXX

FRIO Mixx defied the odds and outlived the "Zagu" craze

Selling a franchise without a single store

THE EMERGENCE of the Frio Mixx food chain as a potential player against the country's fastfood giants has raised eyebrows and challenged conventional business practices.

A venture among five friends from different fields, Frio Mixx has defied the odds by outlasting the "bandwagon trend" which paved way for it.

Frio Mixx started in 2000, as the "shake craze" was nearing its waning stages. Inspired by the success of the trend and bonded by their love for food, the five owners, Sarah Jane Rellera, Arian Lim, Elvy Ng, Richie Gaw Gonzalo and Kenneth Cheng decided to serve a variety of shakes.

The five are involved in the manufacturing and imports business.

Pooling their resources, the five owners went abroad to do research and to procure high-tech equipment. At that time, they didn't even have a name or logo yet for their store, but they already started selling to franchisees.

"We gathered friends and acquaintances one night, and made the pitch, explaining the product and its distinctive qualities, which are basically healthy because of the natural ingredients used and sealed in quality. That night, we got five franchisees at only P50,000. Now, the franchise fee is P500,000 in just barely three years," Rellera relates.

Those in the business who heard their story point out that they are fortunate to achieve such a success in a short amount of time and without religiously following the structures of forming a venture.

This was followed by five more willing partners who wanted to open their franchise. This year, they will have 33 stores around Metro Manila. Anticipating the "death" of the shake craze in the latter part of 2001, they realized they had to offer more than shakes in order for the restaurant to survive. So they expanded the menu to include meals, snacks, and other products.

But this is where the similarities with fastfood joints end for Frio Mixx. Their meals can only be called a combination of "fastood" and "fine dining." Following the system of fastfood chains, meals are served in quick time and at lower prices than fine dining places. Since last year, Frio Mixx meals include Bolognese Pasta, Italian Sausage in Tomato sauce, using real tomato to make the sauce, Seafood in Pesto sauce.

Rice toppings at prices ranging from P49 to P65 include Pork Binagoongan, Beef Stew, Chicken Curry and more.

The secret to subsidizing the cost for maintaining quality standards is good sourcing and an efficient commissary, Rellera explained. "We guarantee all the ingredients being used are safe and fresh. Our operations team goes around to check quality and ensure it is maintained in all the stores. Quality, and food with no preservatives or extenders, is our best asset and that's what we want to be known for," she added.

The restaurants are also sporting a more wholesome, classy and improved look. Far from the previous colorful small/"cute" kiosks and stores, Frio Mixx is now opening stores with areas more than 100 to 180-sq.m. with ample sitting areas and cozy interiors, as part of the company's image upgrading.

The cost for the franchise today has reached the P2 to P3-million mark. Some of their franchisees have already opened their second store. "People who try our food and get interested call us to apply for a franchise. We assist our franchisee from the hiring, training up, renovation up to their opening of the business," Rellera said.

Another market they aim to attract is the coffee shop patrons, using their own blend of Hot and Iced Coffee in different flavors. They are upgrading to espresso machines, and are planning to come up with pastries product line to go with the coffee. "The challenge now is to sustain the quality of our food and operations, because we believe it's good, and we want people to know that about us," says Rellera.

Their efforts have been noticed. They bagged the 2003 National Consumers Quality & People's Choice Awards as the "Top Specialty Shop" and the "Outstanding Specialty Shop" from the 2003 Outstanding Family Consumers Award.

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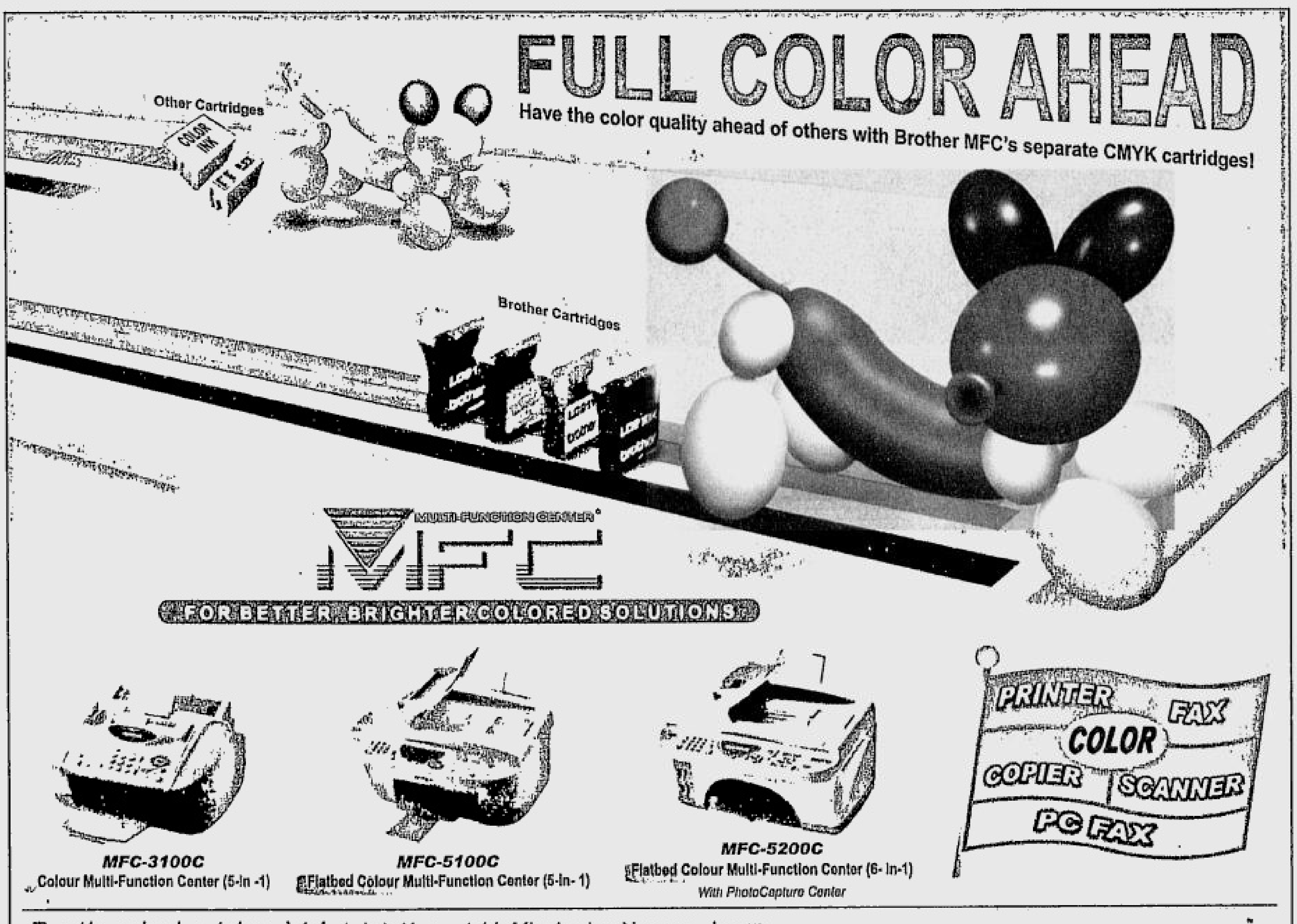

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

High school student wins 5K race in slippers

CADION improves on her 2002 3rd place finish. Still, the sneakers can wait.

SIXTEEN-year-old Ella Cadion was only in her slippers when she ran the women's five-km race of the 27th National Milo Marathon in Cagayan de Oro City.

She tripped, fell and her slippers almost got torn but still the new pride of Pagadian National High School (PNHS) emerged as the fastest girl in the listed 8,500 5K runners of the province with a time of 21 minutes and 11 seconds.

A farmer's daughter from the Pagadian province, Cadion expressed that she felt more at ease running in her trusty pair of rubber slippers rather than buy a new pair of cross trainers or running shoes.

"Mas gusto ko po talaga ang tumatakbo ng naka-tsinelas, kasi mas sanay po ako," she shyly explained in Visayan..

Ella was already up and about before the rooster started to crow and took the jeepney ride with her dad from Pagadian to the Gregorio Pelaez Sports Complex, where the race would start. She arrived at the venue 30 minutes before the starting gun was fired off, giving her ample time to do some warm ups.

Cagayan de Oro listed over 9,000 runners, with roughly 8,500 participants taking part in the 5K run-so far, the largest in the history of Milo Marathon's regional races. But the huge turnout failed to dampen the spirit of Ella who really measured up to the tagline of her finisher's shirt: "I survived the race!"

"Hindi naman po ako kinabahan, gusto ko lang po talagang tumakbo at sumali dito sa Milo (marathon)," she timidly explained.

The second kid in a brood of 9, Ella is no stranger to the country's premier running festival. Last year, she also participated in the 5K event and logged on a time that secured for her the third place overall that came with a trophy and P1,500 cash award.

It would have been enough to buy a pair of trusty running shoes with some left to give to her mom, but Ella would rather share the prize with her family in exchange for a new pair of shoes.

This year, the soft-spoken teener won for herself P2,500 and a handsome trophy. Asked if she would be buying herself a nice pair of shoes, the high school student smiled before answering: "Ibibigay ko po ulit sa mama ko, para makatulong sa aming araw-araw na gastusin.

"Hindi ko naman po gusto ang bagong sapatos, mainit po sa paa kapag tumatakbo po ako. Hindi ako kumportable, kasi hindi rin naman po ako sanay," Ella explained.

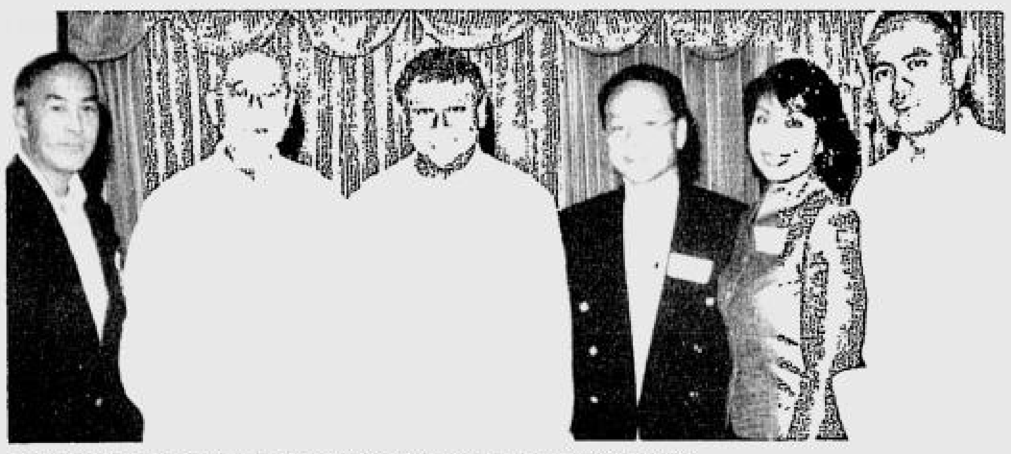
Cadion's humbling tale is reminiscent of Arsenia Sagaray's story, Milo's first-ever woman marathoner who held the crown for five years. Sagaray, like Ella Cadion, preferred to run in the medium that she was most comfortable with. But unlike Cagayan de Oro's young champ who at least settles for a pair of slippers, Sagaray used to run on the Rizal Memorial track and field oval barefooted.

Cadion disclosed that she was not a member of her school's varsity team and that her love for running was simply a passion in which she excelled in.

If she was just an average student at the PNHS, things are now a bit different. After all, it isn't everyday one gets to compete against a throng of 8,500 runners and emerge as the fastest girl in the race.

BDO-WESTERN UNION BANGKOK PROMO

E-Business Services Inc (Ebsi) general manager Al Tady and Banco de Oro Universal Bank (BDO) branch banking head Jaime Yu shake hands to formalize the launch of the BDO-Western Union Bangkok Family Vacation Promo. This is a project of BDO, together with Ebsi and Western Union. Also shown are (from left) BDO VP for marketing support Edith D. Dychiao and BDO branch banking head Gerry Diaz.



SSHG INAUGURATES OFFICE IN SUBIC (23SYCIP)

SyCip Salazar Hernandez & Gatmaitan (SSHG), the country's largest law firm, recently inaugurated its branch office inside the Subic Special Economic and Freeport Zone, with Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority chair and administrator Felicito C. Payumo as guest of honor. The affair was attended by most of the firms' 42 partners as well as representatives of several local and foreign enterprises and business organizations located within the Freeport Zone. Recognizing Subic as Central Luzon's industrial hub, SSHG is the first top-tier law firm to establish a presence inside the Freeport Zone. SSHG currently has 130 lawyers whose diverse practice is reflected in the firm's seven principal departments. Payumo is shown with SyCip partner Andres Sta. Maria, senior counsel Florentino Feliciano, partners Llewellyn Llanillo, Marilyn Victorio-Aquino and SBMA officer Robert Feliciano. SSHG's Subic office is located at the ground floor, Alpha Building (888), Subic International Hotel, Central Business District, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, 2222 Olongapo City, with telephone numbers (047)252-3983 or (047)252-3985, fax (047)252-3986.

A DECADE OF SUCCESS

Johnny P. Lee (10th from left), ATT Group of Companies chairman of the board and chief executive officer, and wife, Hope Q. Lee (9th from left), ATT Group of Companies president, lead the ceremonial victory toast marking the company's decade of success during its 10th anniversary celebration at the Celebrity Sports Plaza in Quezon City recently. With the theme: 'A Decade of Success,' Lee underscored the company's current thrust of focusing on diversification in a bid to become one of the leading players in the water business, supply chain management, and services in every region, if not globally. Ms Lee, on the other hand, stressed the need to inculcate customer-oriented values in all facets of the company's operations.

Ive Mendes unmasks Shang Plaza Streetscape

IVE MENDES, the sultry Brazilian song goddess and songwriter, will fly in directly from the United Kingdom to unmask Streetscape, Shangri-La Plaza Mall's newest and hippest gimmick and dining spot on Aug. 29. This sensual pop-jazz diva is expected to intoxicate Streetscape party guests with her soothing brand of Nu-Brazil sound.

Ive admits to being heavily influenced by Brazilian music legends Jobim and Astrud Gilberto, as well as pop-jazz idols Sade and Everything But The Girl. Ive calls her own soothing brand of music Nu-Brazil, a mélange of the traditional and the alternative.

Also adding color to the carnaval-themed street party are the Sergio Mendes-inspired Pinacolada band, bossa nova DJs with the special guest performance of Pops Fernandez, the mall's celebrity endorser. Clowns, jugglers, face painters, henna tattoo and caricature artists will add flavor to Streetscape's launch party.

While the show is strictly invitational, Shang Shoppers can join the fun by shopping with their Mastercard until Aug. 29 at any of the mall's stores. A minimum same day, single receipt of P2,000 or same-day multiple receipt of P3,000 entitles them to one free invitation.

For more inquiries, call Shangri-La Plaza at 633-7851.

PEST-AWAY AWARDED ISO 9001:2000 CERTIFICATION

Recently awarded international recognition for quality standards in pest management, Pest Away, the first ISO 9001:2000 certified Pest Management Service Provider in the country, furthers its commitment in providing its growing clientele world-class customer support services and technology. Pest Away received the certification from BM Trada Certification Ltd, a certification body authorized to carry out the Quality System Certification in compliance with ISO 9000 series standards. Pest Away is an active member of the Pest Control Association of the Philippines (PCAP) and National Pest Management Association of the United States (NPMA). Shown are, from left, Pest Away's business development manager Arlene A. David, general manager Jonathan C. David, Muntinlupa City Mayor Jaime Fresnedi and BM Trada Philippines Inc GM Theresa Marcelo-Toyn during the awarding ceremony. For inquiries, call 861-3403/04, 862-2973, or e-mail pest-away@pacific.net.ph.

Bits Clips

Foodservers training set

BE A good foodserver in just five days. A Basic Fodservers Training has been set by ProActive Center for Training (PACT) from Aug. 25 to 29 from 1 to 5 p.m. at Ipanema Bar & Restaurant , 2nd Level Eastwood City-Walk, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City. Inquiries are accepted at 787-6370, or at 0916-8226053. The course is open to those who would like to pursue a foodservice career here and abroad. The training features hands-on workshops.

On distressed properties

INVESTORS and other interested parties are invited to attend a real estate seminar by Urban Institute of Real Estate on Aug. 26, 1:30 to 6 p.m. titled "Making Big Money In Distressed Properties" at Max's Restaurant, Glorietta 2, Park Square Drive, Ayala Center, Makati City. The lecture includes how to solve the owner's problem, the overall strategies, keys to success, how to find distressed properties/sellers, how to make your offer, important provisions for your protection, negotiating strategies with owner and lender, common mistakes to avoid, valuing properties by mini-appraisal, and tips on inspecting properties, financing, rehabilitating the property, and taxation, among others. Lecturer is engineer Enrico S. Cruz. Call the Urban Institute at 681-0953.

Direct marketing success

FIVE International marketing specialists from the Asia-Pacific region share their expertise in direct marketing to help businesses attain returns and success. The speakers are Shane Weaver and Kent Wertime of Ogilvy Interactive, Asia Pacific, Sumeet Kanwar of iLeo, Asia Pacific, Sarah Boussofiane of Ogilvy & Mather, Japan, and Paul Gotham of Rapp Collins, Asia. These DM and CRM gurus will be coming to Manila as guest speakers for the 3rd Direct Marketing Forum on Aug. 26 and 27 at the Rizal Ballroom, Makati Shangri-La Hotel from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with the theme "Creating Great Results". Call the Direct Marketing Forum secretariat care of Salt and Light Ventures Inc at 813-2732, 813-2703 or 813-2745 and look for Jenny.

Aviation Pageant in December

AFTER taking a hiatus for almost 30 years, one of the most glamorous and popular events in the country is going to be held anew-the Miss Aviation Beauty Pageant.

Quite fittingly, the Miss Aviation 2003 Beauty Pageant will be held as part of the activities that will mark the country's celebration of the 100th year of aviation, which is being spearheaded by Naia general manager Edgar Manda.

Organized by The EGL Production and Promotions in cooperation with the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (Aopa) and Federation Aviation Organization (Fedavor), the pageant aims to find an ambassador of goodwill for aviation in our country, who will promote the Philippine air industry and tourism locally and internationally and inspire young Filipinos to take up aviation-related courses and to start careers in aviation.

Some of the former Miss Aviation title holders include renowned dancer Joji Felix Velarde and actress Lotis Key.

The pageant is open to single Filipinas who are students of aviation schools or who are connected with aviation-related companies, aged 17 to 23 and stand 5 feet 3 inches and above.

The coronation night will be held on Dec. 17-the eve of the 100th anniversary of aviation-at the Teatro Aguinaldo in Camp Heneral Emilio Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Qualified candidates may file their applications with The EGL Production and Promotions office located at 108 ground floor, Ortigas Building, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. For details, call 634-8655.

24th Manila Int'l Book Fair

THE 24TH Manila International Book Fair kicks off on Saturday, Aug. 30, at the Megatrade Hall, Building B, SM Megamall. It runs until Sept. 7. With theme "Enhancing Global Competitiveness Through Reading," the Book Fair aims to promote awareness of books and literacy as the keys to a country's development. At the Book Fair, publishers and book distributors showcase a wide variety of literature, textbooks, educational supplements, general references, religious and inspirational titles, self-help books, management books, Filipiniana, coffee table books, popular novels, children's books, rare and hard-to-find titles, magazines, audio and e-books. Publishers will also be launching new titles. Various exhibitors will mount seminars, workshops and forums for parents, teachers and librarians. Finally, the Book Fair is the venue for the National Book Awards. The 24th Manila International Book Fair is organized by Primetrade Asia Inc in partnership with the Association of Philippine Booksellers, the Asian Catholic Publishers Inc, the Book Development Association of the Philippines, and the Publishers Representatives Organization of the Philippines. It is sponsored by the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philonline, Visine's Read to Lead, 105.1 Crossover, 99.5 RT, 701 DZAS, Magic 89.9, Jam 88.3, IFM 93.9 and 103.5 K-Lite, and supported by the Association of Special Libraries of the Philippines, the Medical and Health Librarians Association of the Philippines, the Philippine Association of Academic and Research Libraries, the Philippine Association of Teachers of Library Science, and the Philippine Librarians Association Inc. For inquiries, call 896-0682 and 896-0695 or e-mail ptrade@philonline.com.

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Operations man always hits the ground running

AFTER finishing the New York Marathon, Barrameda now guns for the more elite Boston Marathon.

AUGUSTO Barrameda III is an unassuming man. Bedecked in glasses and business attire, his gentle voice and manner further add to the deceit. Looking at him, there is no clear indication of what he actually is and what he can do. The reality is, he can run distances of 10 kilometers.

Tito, has the stamina and dedication to withstand obstacles most people would find torturous. He has put his body to the test for the most part of his 40 years through balancing rigorous daily training and the demands of his job as Operations Supervisor of the Corporate Business Group of Ayala Land, where he has been employed now for 15 years.

Tito joined Ayala Land fresh from college. A novice in the business community then, he was already a veteran on the track. His passion for running started in high school. His first road race (a 15-km run) in 1980 started a snowball of events that he couldn't quite control.

He was a member of the Adamson University track and field varsity team. He was self-coached. In the 90's, his interest in sports widened. He is considering doing a triathlon (run, swim, bike) someday. But the highlights of his athletic career remain to be his first ever UAAP track meet in 1981, the National Open in 1985 and 1988, and the challenging New York City Marathon in 1998.

Despite all these experiences and accolades, he hasn't stopped setting goals for himself. He now plans to make it to the Boston Marathon, which is considered the Mecca of running. The Boston Marathon is an elite competition because there is a qualifying time. Tito is currently pushing himself to make the 3 hour and 20 minute qualifying time of his age bracket. He's up most days by 4 a.m. to begin training. He then heads off to work where he spends most of his day. After work, Tito hits the ground running, literally. He continues his work out by either going to the gym or training outdoors. One wonders how he does it, when most people his age are visibly weaker and more prone to exhaustion. He says, "I'm just harnessing the energy I have in this aging body. I dare to defy age."

Tito even coaches other runners in his spare time. Imparting the knowledge that he's earned over the years to the willing fulfills him more than winning the running events he's joined.

When asked why he chose running, he answers, "Running has a lot of potential." He explains that it is a sport that does not leave much room for discrimination because anyone can run. Tito has also admittedly always been fascinated with the challenge of a marathon because it is the ultimate distance event. A marathon is running a distance of 42 km.

With regard to his running gear, Tito remains staunchly loyal. He's been wearing Nike since 1985. He wore other brands in the past but found that Nike running shoes best fit his needs. In an arena where using the right shoe is of obvious importance, Tito swears by his Nikes, "It's important to find the one that's right for you and that fits perfectly." He says that stability, flexibility, support and cushioning are important factors to consider when buying shoes and suggests to always put the shoe on trial before choosing. Walk in them, run in them, and jump in them. He notes, "When you find the one that works for you, you stick to it." He is now on his seventh pair of Nike Pegasus and hopefully, this same shoe will take him to the Boston Marathon.

As his solid advice to young runners, Tito states, "Dream high, be consistent, enjoy what you're doing, and never give up." His own personal philosophy is to just do it, borrowing a line from his favorite brand. He says he'll keep on doing all of this until he decides to stop, not when his body tells him to. With his passion and perseverance, we can almost picture Tito Barrameda running the streets of Boston in Nike Pegasus, slowly whispering to himself in the tough moments of the marathon, "Just do it." We have no doubt that he will.

AUGUSTO Barrameda III is the Operations Supervisor of the Corporate Business Group of Ayala Land.

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Taking care …

From page B2-8

the family have always thought that reputation is the brand. In our case it has become the family name. I don't agree with it but people know it, so the first thing we look at when we decide on things is to make sure that our actions do not tarnish our reputation," he says.

MANAGEMENT STYLES

Negotiations and reputation

He says that reputation is carried through negotiations with other companies. He says one should also be considered fair when dealing with other firms by making sure that both leave the negotiating table happy.

"It can't be all about you and you should never take advantage of somebody who is falling or in difficulty, you should probably even give them more to help them," Aboitiz says.

Aboitiz says Aboitiz One wants the brand to be the essence of the company, representing the group's passion for looking for better ways to do things.

"We already showed it in improving sea passenger travel. Ours is the safest in the market because we always compare ourselves against the best in the world. We want to believe that Filipinos can always be better," he stresses.

Delivery service

Aboitiz One's main direction is its "Distribute and Save" service, which aims to give new meaning to delivery service by guaranteeing to clients Aboitiz One's track records in terms of delivery.

Aboitiz One's D& S operations on the concept of just in time delivery which means that orders are delivered just in time to meet orders, thus, cutting down on inventory costs and preventing runouts or out-of-stock situations.

"Our main direction is to distribute and save. We looked at the distribution sector and we saw that costs are high because of insufficiencies and it is not because the Philippines is an archipelago," Aboitiz says.

Aboitiz says distribution costs in the Philippines are high because many logistics firms have stocking stations in different parts of the Philippines, bringing costs up.

"For us, we have one central stocking point in Manila from where we distribute to the other areas. From Manila, we use a sophisticated information technology system to bring the products to the final destination. This means faster delivery and our customers can track it. I estimate that we can distribute products at about half the cost as our competitors, and it also helps that we have our own planes and ships," he says.

What used to take about several days to two weeks to be delivered, Aboitiz One can deliver in about two days. This explains the growth in Aboitiz One's business.

Depending on the kind of business, distribution costs impact significantly on a company's bottom line.

Aboitiz, who reports to his brother Endika, says that he rallies his people behind the goal to make the company the number one in the distribution business by meeting with them individually.

Spending time with staff

"I think I have met half of the 250 staff that we have. I spend about 1 ½ to 2 hours with them. They could be a manager or a member of the rank and file. I try to learn how they think or what is not clear to them about company policies," Aboitiz says.

Aboitiz, who prefers to go to work in jeans and a shirt instead of a suit, is said to be easy to talk to despite his last name and his mestizo features, and his employees could be quite open about their feelings about the company with him.

"I am happy to note that most of the questions that the staff had were about how to improve the company's operations, they asked very little about themselves and that says something good about the people, the average age of which is about 34. I think I bring up the average at 39," Aboitiz says.

Aboitiz says they don't give too much benefits in the company, although he is proud to say that the Aboitiz group generally puts high priority on health benefits.

"We believe that by covering health not only of the employee but of their families, they have peace of mind, then they can concentrate more on work. It is something that we communicate to the people," he says.

Aboitiz is also a firm believer in open communication and in equipping people with the right information.

"If people have information, they can judge fairly and properly," Aboitiz says

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Taking care of the brand, which is the family name

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

SABIN M. Aboitiz is not exactly sure what his name means, but he has been told it means "someone who makes warriors out of women."

The description sits well with Aboitiz whose management team at Aboitiz One, the distribution arm of the Aboitiz group, is composed mostly of women.

Aboitiz says he has no problem with working with men or women, young or old, as long as they pull their weight and do what is best for the company. He stresses that he, just like any other employee, is measured against standards and performance objectives.

Aboitiz describes himself as a very informal and open person and he is generally patient with people's faults.

What raises his blood pressure is stupidity, which he defines as doing something you already knew was wrong.

"The systems or steps that we put on paper for people to follow are not there for show, that is why I find it extremely frustrating when people do not follow instructions or take short cuts," he says.

ABOITIZ

Stickler for procedures

Aboitiz says he is a stickler for following standard operating procedures because of the nature of the company's business, where customers have to know the details of where their products are, or are going.

He describes himself as more of an operations person, while his brother, Endika, to whom he reports to, is in charge of overall policies and the vision for the company.

The 6-foot Aboitiz graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the Gonzaga University in the US. He even worked there washing dishes before joining the family corporation.

Keeping people motivated

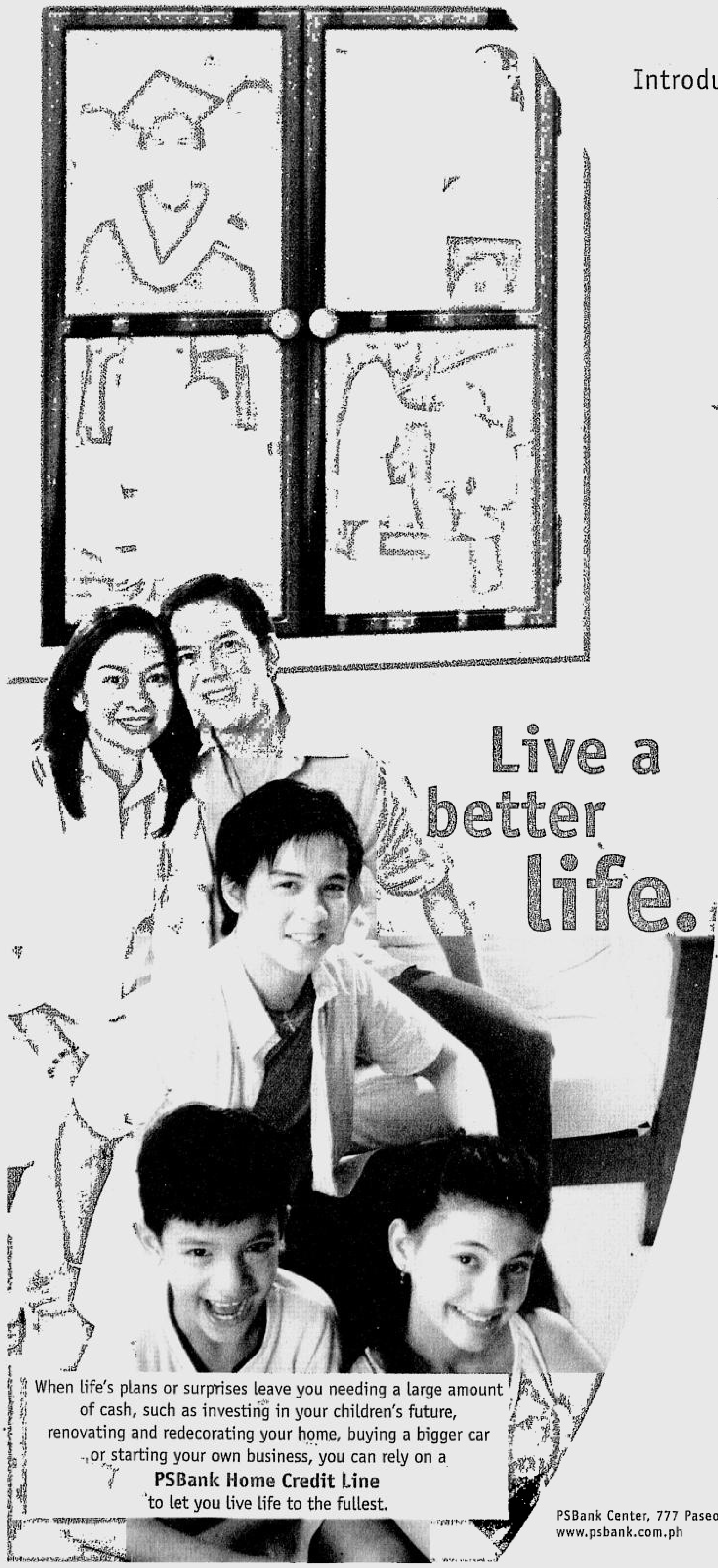
Aboitiz says he keeps his people motivated simply by being fair to all employees across the organization.

That means setting up a performance management system, where people get more if they perform better than their colleagues based on a set of key result areas.

"That system tells them where they are and they can see how they perform against others and against their objectives. In that way they know how they are going to be judged," Aboitiz says.

"You should be fair to everyone you deal with, and build a good reputation for what you do. We in

TAKING/ B2-7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Editor Louie C. Camino

Jamie's recording 'blatantly illegal'

Song owners not credited, lyrics altered

By Marinel R. Cruz

TWO years after singer Jamie Rivera released her "Seasons" album of inspirational songs, a cut from the compilation is now the subject of an infringement complaint.

According to Bobby Chang of BMG Music Publishing Inc. in New York, Star Records, which produced "Season," failed to give credit to Careers-BMG Music Publishing Inc. and Floating Note Music when it included Kathy Troccoli's "My Life is in Your Hands" in Rivera's 12-track album.

Careers-BMG Music Publishing and Floating Note Music own the rights to the Troccoli song, which the latter singer released in 1994, Chang said in a letter to BMG Pilipinas.

Chang said that since Star Records failed to acknowledge the song's owner, it appears that "permission (to use the song) was not granted by Careers-BMG."

Chang said the names of Troccoli and of composer Bill Montvilo were "grossly misspelled" in Rivera's album.

He said the lyrics of the song's chorus, "My heart is in Your keeping/ I'm never without hope" were altered, with "keeping" replaced with "people" and "hope" replaced with "love."

In the coda, "When I'm at my weakest, Lord, You carry me," "Lord" became "stone," said Chang.

"These alterations are blatantly illegal (under) American copyright laws," Chang wrote.

A record executive in Manila, who asked not to be identified, agreed that the alterations were "really illegal."

"We're not yet sure whose fault it was, though," Rivera the singer told INQUIRER Entertainment on Saturday. "I'm sure it was an unintentional omission.

"Typographical errors are common, especially in the lyrics," she added. "I think they should have listened to the album first."

BMG Pilipinas sales and marketing director Narciso Chan said the record company is now looking into the points Chang raised.

Chan also said there is an ongoing dialogue between a group from BMG's local publishing division and another group from Star Records.

Rivera said Star Records sent a copy of "Seasons" to BMG Pilipinas immediately after it received a copy of Chang's letter.

Star Records assistant marketing manager Nixon Sy said he had not received Chang's letter as of Saturday afternoon and so could not comment.

Rivera is one of the Filipino artists who played Kim in "Miss Saigon" at the West End in London.

Since her "Miss Saigon" stint, Rivera has been recording mostly inspirational songs.

In 2000, she recorded the Jubilee song. She also sang the theme of Star Cinema's award-winning movie, Laurice Guillen's "Tanging Yaman."

In 2001, Rivera recorded the prayer song, "Heal Our Land," which became the anthem of Edsa II people power.

In the same year, she released "Seasons," most of whose 12 songs she composed.

RIVERA is sure it's been an "unintentional omission." FILE PHOTO

DID YOU KNOW...

Studio 23 veejay **Bianca Araneta** was seen frolicking on Boracay's beach last Saturday with her boyfriend, **Juan Elizalde**. Juan owns the new Italian restaurant Aria at Station 2, near the entrance to D'Mall ·D'Boracay, which the Elizaldes also own. Bianca was seen taking pictures with her Nikon 5700 while walking on the powdery sand of the resort island.

FAMILY WAY. Sanchez ready for motherhood

Giselle Sanchez funny lady, serious shopper

/C3

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A caring reminder from Shellane

Defining moments

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE COUNTRY marked the 20th anniversary of Ninoy Aquino's heroic death last Aug. 21. The special observance brought up a diverse range of memories, issues and insights, depending on people's varying points of view.

For our part, the occasion triggered the sad realization that, despite the gifted filmmakers in our midst, no movie has been made about Ninoy's supreme sacrifice, 20 long years after his death.

We hope that this glaring lack will be addressed this coming film season by a perceptive and committed writer and director, and that a similarly resolute producer finances the long-delayed film bio.

The Filipino movie industry owes it to the country to come up with a well-produced and insightful feature film on Ninoy Aquino, and on what his life and death have meant to the Filipino people.

Twenty years after the fact, now is the time to come up with that filmic dramatization and assessment, especially for the benefit of viewers too young to have witnessed the tumultuous events of the '70s and '80s for themselves.

To be sure, Ninoy Aquino was a controversial man who meant radically different things to different people. All the more reason, then, for gifted film people to dare to take on the daunting challenge of doing justice to such a complex character, within the many contexts that people have put him in through the years.

Ninoy's incarceration and death were such defining moments for the country that a movie about him wouldn't be limited merely to a faithful narrative of his life and martyrdom.

In a greater sense, the movie would be about the Filipino nation itself, because of what it has seen fit to remember, and what it has chosen to forget.

AXN animé specials

AXN telecasts "Animé on Demand" at 10 p.m. on Aug. 28, and "Animé Marathon" from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Aug. 30.

A staggering 850,000 online votes have chosen the top three animé titles—"Vandread the Movie," "Samurai X the Movie" and "Darker Descendent, Kyoto Chapter." Catch the final installment on Aug. 28, plus the rebroadcast on Aug. 30, with the blockbuster animé movie, "Metropolis."

The Animé Marathon on Aug. 30 features the three titles and "Metropolis." Telecast schedule: 10 a.m., "Vandread the Movie." 11:30 a.m., "Samurai X." 1:30 p.m., "Darker Descendent, Kyoto Chapter." 3:30 p.m., "Metropolis."

HBO takes top honors

For the third year in a row, HBO has been voted Asia's favorite cable and satellite channel by 41 pay-TV operators in 16 Asian countries.

HBO led in these categories: Best Programming Quality, Sales and Marketing, On-Air Promotions, Most Popular Channel and Best Viewer Feedback, and Value for Money.

Singapore-based HBO Asia has exclusive licensing deals with major Hollywood studios—Warner Bros., Columbia Tri/Star, Paramount, Universal and DreamWorks. Original programs are produced exclusively for HBO viewers, and HBO Asia works with many independent production companies to secure exclusive rights to quality movies.

Jericho at Popeye's

Jericho Rosales will be at the following Popeye's Chicken and Biscuit outlets: Aug. 24, SM Southmall, Las Piñas City. Aug. 31, Filinvest Festival Mall, Muntinlupa City. Sept. 7, SM Bicutan, Parañaque City.

Olivier Martinez

Handsome film hunk Olivier Martinez could have made it in the movies as a romantic or action lead, but he's chosen to package himself as a character actor and villain.

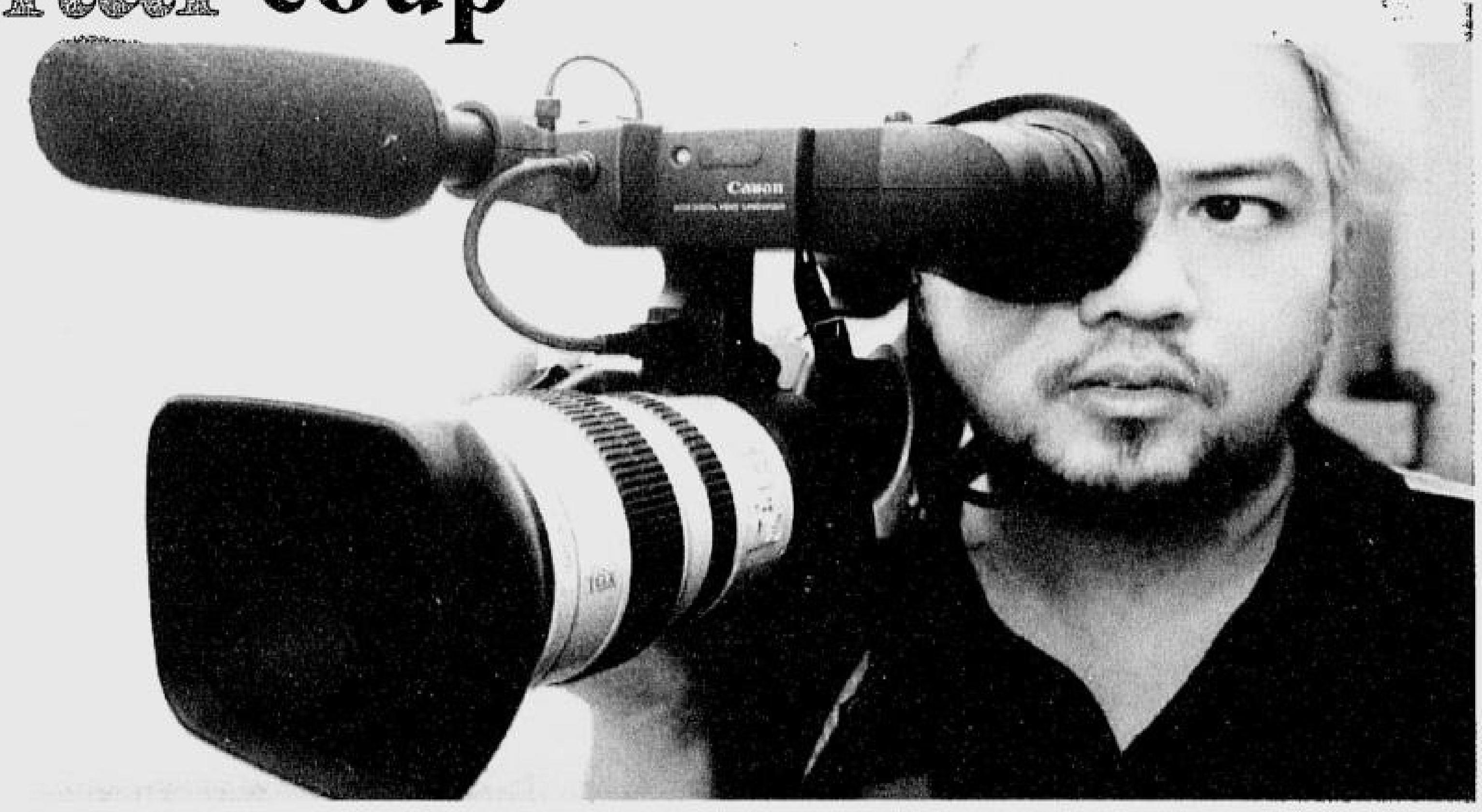
In "Unfaithful," he stole Diane Lane away from her husband (Richard Gere). And now, in "S.W.A.T.," he's the key adversary of Colin Farrell and Samuel L. Jackson, who portray S.W.A.T. team members.

Martinez plays Montel, a notorious drug lord who offers a whopping $100-million reward to anyone who can free him from police custody. As the S.W.A.T. team escorts the kingpin out of Los Angeles and into the hands of the Feds, they are pursued by a ruthless and well-armed band of reward-seekers.

Martinez's other film credits: "Horseman on the Roof" with Juliette Binoche, "Before Night Falls," "The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone" with Anne Bancroft, and "Toreros with Claude Brasseur."

Plotting a digital coup

By Volt Contreras



BEAT GENERATION. Digital filmmaker and promoter Khavn de la Cruz predicts it will be easier for the next generation "to beat the system."

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

FROM his flat along Kamias Road in Quezon City, where he dreams up off-beat story lines and lyrics, to his film production house in Makati, where he perfects his visions on the computer, multi-talented Khavn de la Cruz hopes to fan a "digital revolution" in Philippine filmmaking.

"Technology has freed the true artist who wants to make movies," declares Khavn, (pronounced Ka-vin), at 29 already a prolific independent filmmaker who has made five full-length digital features and more than 30 short films, some of which have won in the Gawad-CCP Awards and in the Tokyo Video Festival.

He shot his first 'short' in the mid-'90s as an Atenean apprentice of the renowned Kidlat Tahimik. Khavn has also won Palanca Awards for his poetry and fiction. For a time he provided haven for fellow creative souls, as owner of the now defunct Oracafe in Quezon City.

The former Yamaha Electone Festival champ went on to compose rock operas, as well as earn citations in Metropop and the John Lennon Songwriting Contest in the US.

But he has devoted the last two years to promoting digital films, which he believes could be that long-awaited catalyst for reshaping—and redeeming—the Filipino's cinematic experience. He has founded Filmless Films Inc., an organization based in Salcedo Village, Makati, for the development and marketing of local digital movies. Last year he organized ".MOV," the country's first digital film festival, and also sat in the jury for the digital category of the South Korean Jeonju International Film Festival.

This month, he is serving as a programmer in the ongoing 2003 Makati Cinemanila Film Festival at Greenbelt. During the Cinemanila, he also handed out his "Digital Dekalogo—a Manifesto on a Filmless Philippines," his personal call for the digital film buff to find the Muse, seize the day, and break the norms. He would lift from and expound on this manifesto when interviewed by Inquirer Entertainment recently.

Third World medium

The basic gear— a digital camcorder and a PC— in the hands of daring artists and ingenious storytellers could be enough to launch many a filmmaking career away from the conventional, multimillion-peso studio system, Khavn said.

"Digital film, with its mobility, flexibility, intimacy, and accessibility, is actually an apt medium for a Third World Country like the Philippines," he said. "The technology has reduced the crew into an option, rather than a must. Artificial lighting is not a necessity. It's now possible to make a film by yourself, utilizing all elements within your resources. If you have a knack for music, score your own soundtrack. If you have writing skills, craft your own screenplay. The story is king and everything else follows.

"Work only with those who are willing to work with you, and those who are dedicated to the craft," he said.

Indeed, most of Khavn's works have his own peers and Kamias neighbors as cast, save for a few major projects such as "The Twelve" that starred Angel Aquino, and "Greaseman" featuring Eric Quizon and Lou Veloso.' These were two of the five projects that bagged him Gawad-CCP Awards for Alternative Cinema.

Misconception

That digital equipment is still expensive and hardly worth the investment unless one intends to use it for business like, say, wedding video coverage service or corporate audio-visual presentations, is for him a "misconception."

"Do the math," he said. "A minute of celluloid film, including processing, costs around P1,500, while a minute of digital film only costs around P3." Khavn's current personal gear includes a Canon XL1, a 3-CCD Camcorder; a smaller 1-CCD Canon Elura ZR20; G4 Mac for editing; and Final Cut Pro, Adobe After Effects for software, among others.

"I know of a digital video camera that can be had for only P30,000, or less if it's secondhand," Khavn said.

"You can also just buy a video card for your PC, boost the memory and speed, get an editing software from your favorite *sari-sari* store, hoard other software you think would help, and start your *obra maestra*."

With the tools becoming affordable and the playing field leveling, he said, "I believe it will be easier for the next generation of filmmakers than it was for my generation to beat the system." He was referring to "producers and distributors who underestimate the *masa* audience," the same mindset that some earlier Filipino directors tried to reform "but unfortunately, to no avail."

Fast forward

"The Filipino audience has become frustrated with the local mainstream (cinema), because the terribly made films are still described as 'mediocre' and the mediocre films are already hailed as 'great'," he said.

A few months back, Khavn recalled, he witnessed how members of a foreign film fest panel apparently found supposedly modern Filipino "masterpieces" rather stale and predictable.

How could he tell? "They just kept on pressing the fast-forward button."

But what's really the sporting chance of digital filmmakers, especially the fresh talents that could be spawned, in capturing audiences beyond the art house and film fest circuits?

One need not look for Western digital films for encouragement. Khavn cited "Jelangkung," an 2001 Indonesian teen-horror flick that was both deftly made and commercially successful. Treating native myth with the haze, quirkiness, and grit of MTV-ish shots, "Jelangkung" is about four students who dare investigate Jakarta's urban legends, ultimately courting ghostly encounters.

One of the featured films at the ongoing Cinemanila, it was said to have enjoyed a longer theater run in Indonesia than "Titanic."

Amateur attitude

Khavn advises aspiring digital disciples to enter contests and festivals, including scriptwriting tilts, such as the next edition of .MOV, Cinemanila, Silvershorts, Pelikula at Lipunan, Gawad-CCP, and Inyorai Video Festival.

They can form their "own band of outsiders with a common vision," or see what help they can get from filmmaking outfits like

PLOTTING/ C6

DRILON. "I really enjoyed myself."

Ces Drilon, coup veteran

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

A BROADCAST journalist for 18 years now, Ces Oreña Drilon has been witness to many important events in Philippine history, including the 1986 People Power, the 1989 coup attempts, Edsa Dos in 2001 and, most recently, the Oakwood mutiny.

"I hate to reveal my age," says Drilon, "but the Oakwood is my nth coup. I guess that is why some people said I was kind of blasé about it."

That, for her, is a good thing because it showed that she managed to stay calm and cool in an otherwise nerve-racking situation. Compared to the 1989 coup which Sen. Gringo Honasan led, the Oakwood coup was more relaxed, she says. "I wasn't really scared. Not like that time (1989), when there were really bullets flying."

During the 1989 coup, instead of muttering prayers while she was doing her coverage, she kept on saying the names of her two kids then, Ory who was 4 and Miko who was 3. And she would not know until after the coup attempt had been quashed that she was pregnant with her third child.

Scared

Drilon started her broadcast career in 1985 as a field reporter in the government-owned Channel 4. In 1989, she joined ABS-CBN and had her first scoop as a journalist: She was the only one who covered the arrest of Gringo.

Drilon says it does not really take extraordinary courage to be able to do what she has done. "I think every journalist would want to get their story, to do the same, no matter what," she says.

But she admits to at least one coverage where she really got scared and prayed for dear life. In 1990, when Maj. Joe Pring was ambushed, she and her cameraman happened to be just three or four cars away from Pring's. When they heard the gunshots, Drilon ran to the scene and proceeded to report what had just transpired to Mel Tiangco and Jay Sonza, who were on the air on radio. The assassins, who would later be identified as communist hit men, forced Drilon and the cameraman to surrender their videotape and their radio.

"Sabi sa amin, ibigay nyo, ibigay nyo!" Drilon recalls. "I did not want to give the radio, *pero sa takot ko na rin siguro, ibinigay ko rin.*" It was her most unforgettable experience as a reporter, she says now.

Recognized

Last July 26, Drilon held a story conference for her weekly magazine show on ABS-CBN, "Pipol." On the same day, President Macapagal-Arroyo revealed the names of the 10 junior military officers who she said were plotting a coup against the government. Drilon decided that the next episode of "Pipol" would include a profile of at least one of the 10 soldiers.

When she woke up the next day, Sunday, the Oakwood mutiny had unfolded. She decided to go to Oakwood, intent on interviewing the mutineers. While she was there, she volunteered to report from the field, although she had not been required to be there. She says, "*Ano pa ang silbi ng pagiging* reporter *mo kung wala ka doon? Iba talaga kasi* if you're there. *Ibang-iba.*"

To get into Oakwood, she tried every possible entrance but they were all tightly guarded. Another ABS-CBN reporter, Alvin Elchico, was already inside. She asked him by cell phone if he could get her clearance to enter.

Being a known media personality was a liability for her that day. When she was trying to enter, the soldiers recognized her and refused to let her in.

"so I charmed the soldiers," says Drilon. "*Ang sabi ko, ang tagal, ang tagal, nahihilo na yung mga kasama ko. Tignan ninyo ang bag ko, wala namang laman.*"

Eventually, she got in.

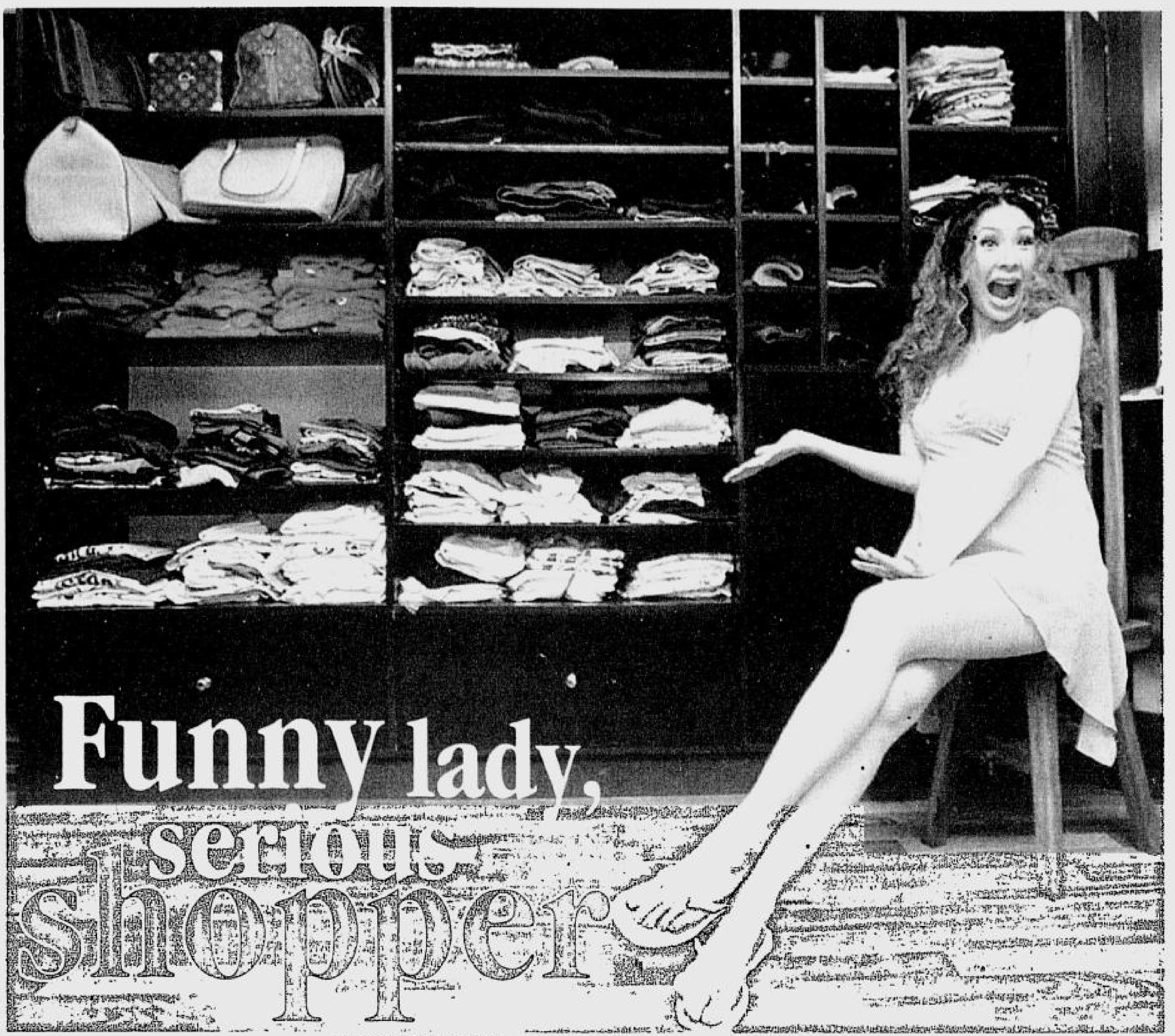
What if the only way in was through an underground tunnel?

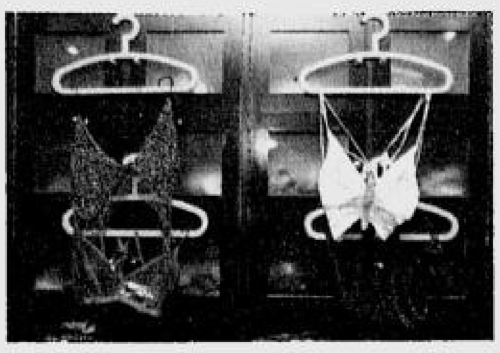
"You know, I almost did that in 1989," Drilon reveals. She wanted to get inside Fort Bonifacio, where the army chief, Maj. Gen. Manuel Cacanando, was under house arrest. She used a back entrance, through a rocky hill with a barbed-wire fence. Her father was a military man himself and used to live inside the fort, so Drilon knew the ins and outs of the area. "But it was hard *ha*," she adds. "It was an uphill climb, and it was rocky. My camera man and I were panting."

After the coverage came criticisms of the media coverage, which did not spare Drilon.

CES C6

Funny lady, serious shopper





TINY, GLITTERY things that go big with the audience when she puts them on

By Julie Fe Navarro
Contributor

GISELLE Sanchez was eight years old when she joined the kiddie TV shows "The Children's Hour," emceed by June Keithley, and "Uncle Bob's Lucky Seven Club." That was when she knew that she wanted to be an actress someday.

Laughing, she recalls her first appearance on another TV program, "Ready, Get Set, Go," as a contestant.

"I was the only one wearing makeup and really projecting," she remembers. "Eric Quizon commented that there's this contestant who's pretty and she should join show business. When the talent coordinator went up to me and asked if I was interested in a show biz career, I answered right away, 'Of course!'"

Later, she was in a stage play where she did a Bella Flores monologue. "Tessie Tomas, Deo Edrinal and Enrico Santos saw me and started helping me guest in ABS-CBN shows," she says. "When Johnny Manahan put me as a guest in 'Abangan ang Susunod na Kabanata,' as the trigger-happy alter ego of Anjo Yllana's character, that was when people started noticing me."

The cum laude graduate of Broadcast Communications from the University of the Philippines confesses, "I really wanted to be noticed even then. Maybe if I hadn't been an actress, I would probably have been behind the cameras as a director or a creative writer. My very first movie was 'Shake, Rattle and Roll.' I was a bit player, like a super-extra. I was behind Ai-Ai de las Alas, laughing every time she laughed."

After 11 years in show biz, Giselle has lost track of the number of times she has performed abroad as a stand-up comedian and program host.

"I would remember the places I've been to, like New York where I've been to four times," she says. "I've been to San Francisco six times. I have performed in Japan four times. I have been to Papua New Guinea.

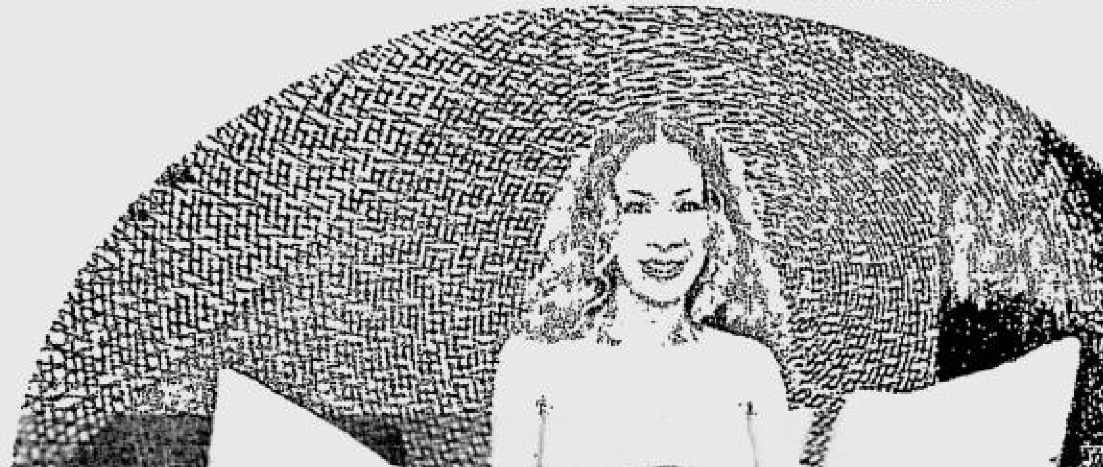
"I don't travel if I won't get paid," she clarifies with a laugh.

And whenever she travels, she goes shopping "because there are some things that you can't find here in the Philippines."

Hangers. "All the hangers in my closet are orange. I got them when I had a show in New York. I ran out of them, so when I had a show in Canada, I bought more hangers from Ikea. When I came back to Manila, I had two *balikbayan* boxes of hangers. And I bought more in Dubai. When I came home, my husband (Emil Buencamino, a Caltex executive by day and a member of the Blow band by night), said, 'What's that?' I told him they were all hangers. That was a year ago and we were starting to have our house made. I knew I needed many hangers for my closet."

Wigs. "I bought most of them in the States because the ones from Taiwan and Bangkok break easily. Actually, they're cheaper in the States. My hairpieces range from $200 to $500 each. My favorite is this one I call the Barbie hairpiece because it makes me look like a Barbie doll."

Perfumes. "My favorite is Escada Graffiti because every time I wear it, the guys always ask me what my perfume is. I guess it has a sensual scent that releases pheromones and these pheromones are what attract a man to a woman. Because of this scent, even when I'm married, I get invitations to go out. It really attracts men."



FRIEND Frodo, a Rotweiller, shares a standout chair by another friend, Ann Pamintuan of Design 8.

Luggage. "Of course, my favorite luggage is Louie Vuitton because it's very sturdy. I used to be such a cheapskate when buying luggage, but realized that a cheap bag would last me only three to four months, unlike my Louie Vuitton bags which have stayed with me for seven, eight, even ten years. I keep on using the same handbag, the same makeup kit, the same luggage day in and day out. I'm not the type who changes bags everyday. All my things are in my favorite Louie Vuitton bag, but now I have to have the bag repaired, in Hong Kong. For the repair alone, I will be spending P15,000.

"I have three favorite bags: my makeup kit where I put all my makeup, this one for all my accessories, and this carry-all. Now I'm using a big, black Bruno Magli. It's so big that I look like a teacher and my friends call me 'Mila' (after the movie which starred Maricel Soriano as a schoolteacher named Mila).

"The things I can't do without? You'll see them in my bag. There's a deodorant which I get from the States, and I really bring a lot of it here.

"I used to have a history of body odor when I was in grade school," she laughs without a trace of embarrassment. "My friends were honest enough to tell me that I had body odor, so I had to use deodorants. That was many years ago. It was a very traumatic experience for me although I don't harbor any resentment against my friends. But now, even when my husband and my parents and everybody else tells me I don't have body odor, I still feel that I have, so I put on my Arm and Hammer deodorant every four hours.

"The brand is available in the Philippines but it's so expensive here, while in the States it's only a dollar. That's why whenever I am in the States, I buy boxes and boxes of Arm and Hammer and hoard them in my closet."

Makeup. "I use Cezanne, which I discovered in Japan. It's very cheap and is as good as Shu Uemura and Shisheido, but the price is one-tenth of Shu Uemura and Shisheido."

Shoes. "Now that I'm pregnant, most of my shoes are flat. (She is due to deliver her first baby on Sept. 25. She and Emil intend to name the baby Emilia Gisella.) I used to always wear heels and boots. I was advised not to when I became pregnant, but I still continued wearing shoes with heels. Then on my fifth month of pregnancy, I had a concert at the Megatrade Hall with Jose Mari Chan and I slipped on stage. Fortunately, Jose Mari caught me, or I would have lost my baby! Since then, I've been wearing flats.

"This is my current favorite, this black glitzy Angels sandals with fake diamonds which I bought in Italy. I have over 65 pairs of shoes in my closet now but I have many more in my storage room upstairs (the closet is on the second floor and the storage room is on the third floor of her newly built house in Rolling Hills, New Manila). I don't remember how many pairs I have in the storage room because I have this habit of giving away my things, like shoes I haven't used for six months.

"I like Enzio Anglio shoes. I have two pairs of them. I also have Manolo Blahnik stilletos which I bought in the United States."

Jeans. "My favorite brand is Xoxo which I bought in the States. When Rustan's brought them here, I was so happy. There's a new brand that I also like. It's Zara, a Spanish brand."

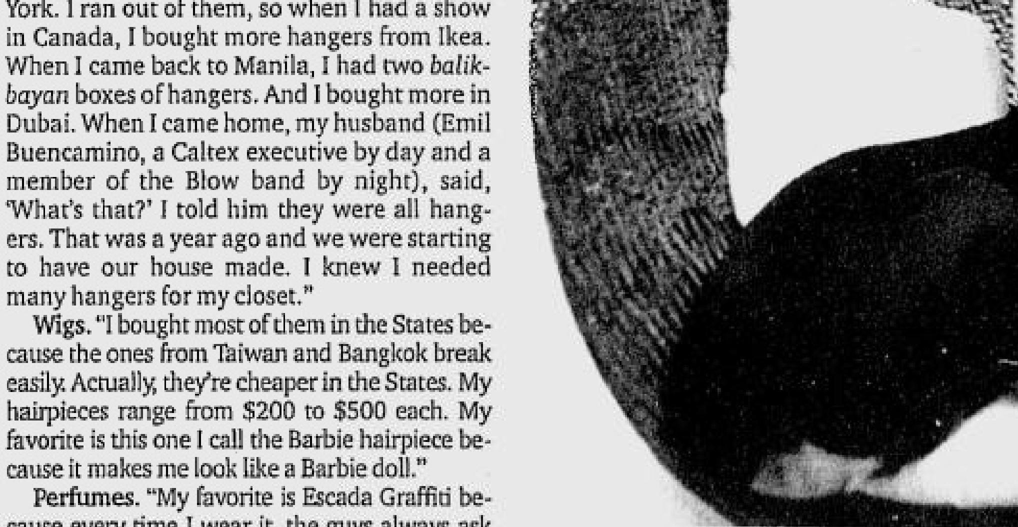
Candles. "I love taking long baths, sometimes for as long as three hours. All the candles are lit while I soak in the tub."

Video. "At the back of my bed is my collection of books, CDs and DVDs. My favorite DVD is Chris Rock's stand-up shows. We have a reading area just beside the bed where I read every night my favorite book, the Bible. I used to like 'The Celestine Prophecy.' Now I'm reading 'The Purpose-Driven Life' by Rick Warren.

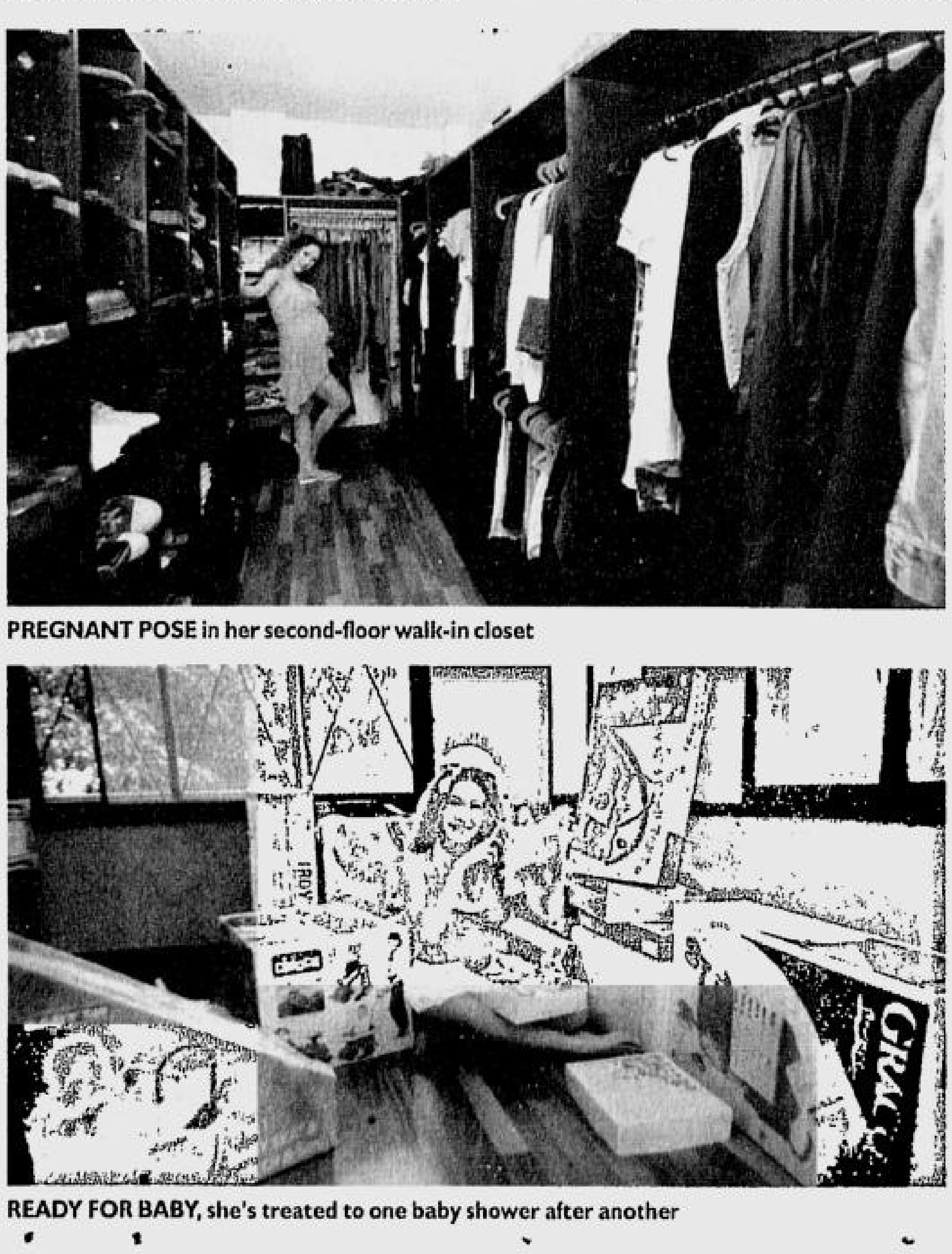
"My bed? I copied the design from DDC on Madison Street in New York. It was like $34,000, but Filipinos being the king of copycats, I had it copied here and got it for one-tenth of the price. The Pieta on the left side is from Rome and the one on the right side is from Venice."

OUT OF THE CLOSET

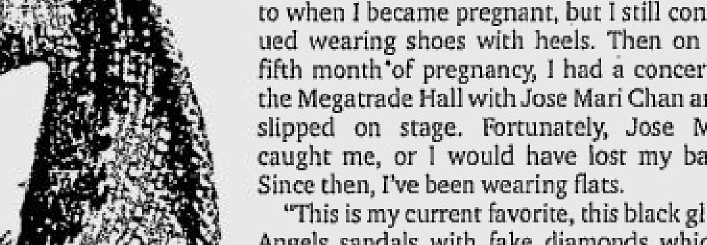
Photos by
Jim Guiao Punzalan



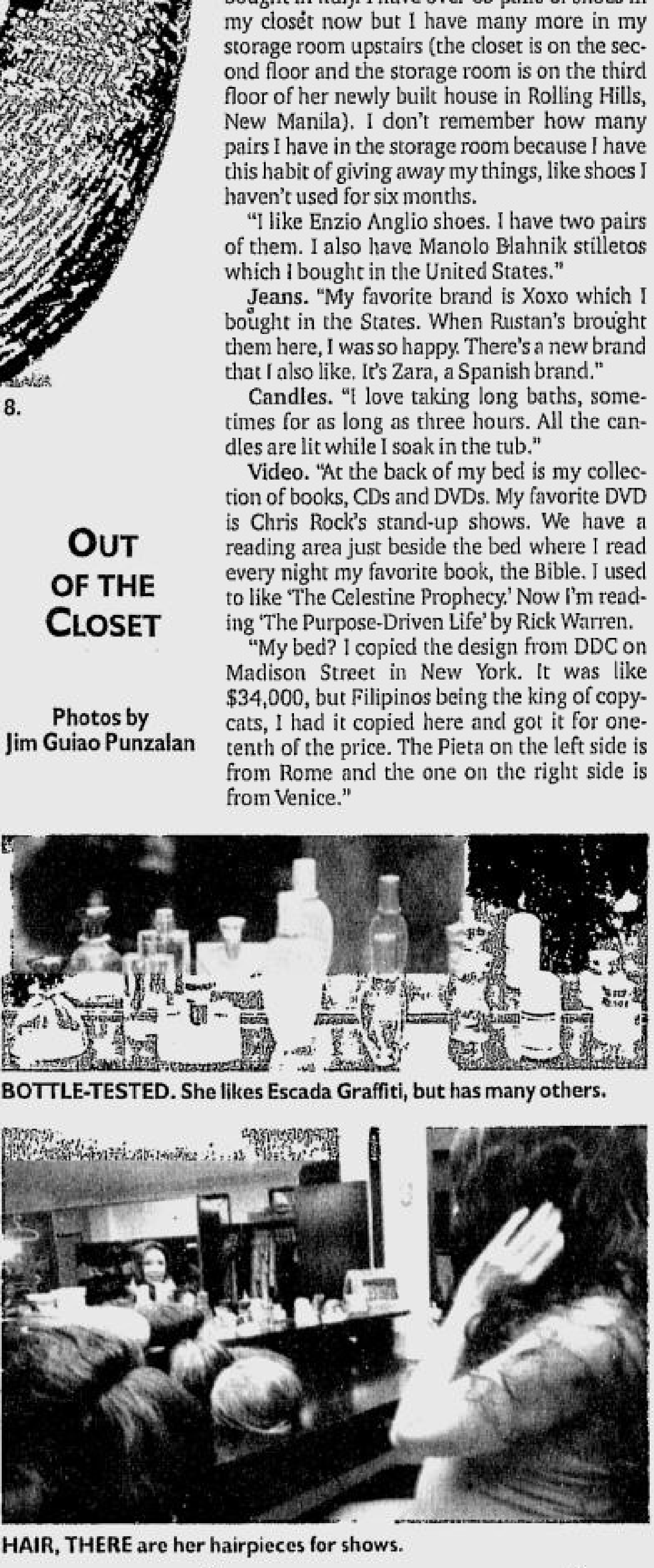
PREGNANT POSE in her second-floor walk-in closet



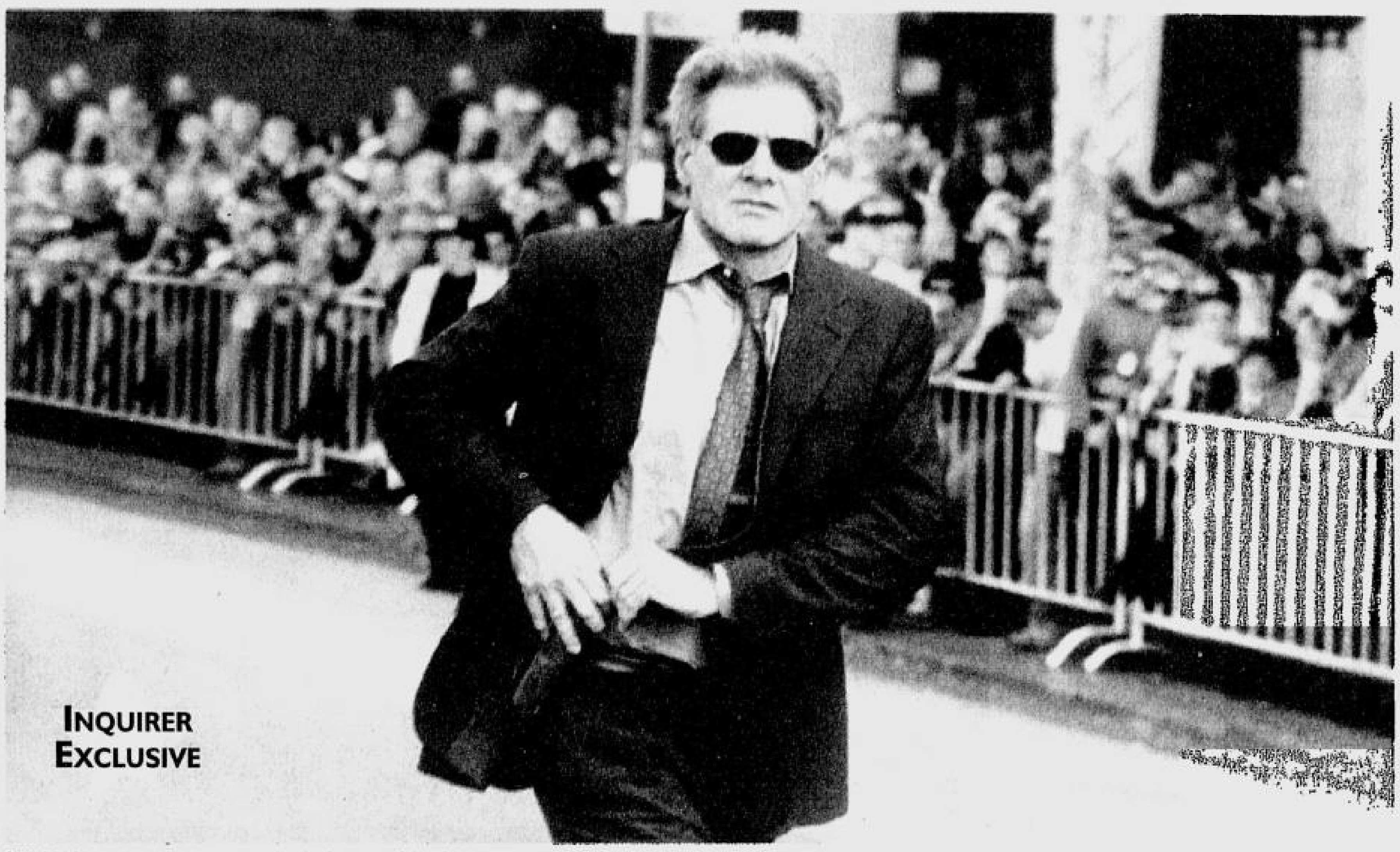
READY FOR BABY, she's treated to one baby shower after another



BOTTLE-TESTED. She likes Escada Graffiti, but has many others.



HAIR, THERE are her hairpieces for shows.



INDIANA JONES plays a detective before reprising his most memorable role in the Steven Spielberg series.

'The toughest interview in Hollywood'

By Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—When you come to interview Indiana Jones, it is totally unexpected to see that he has a silver earring on his left ear.

But then you hear "Hello" and "How are you?" in that deep voice. It's Harrison Ford, all right.

This afternoon, he's not wearing his favorite Wranglers ("they make my butt look so good," he told his girlfriend, actress Calista Flockhart, when she wrote about him for Interview magazine).. The superstar who also played Han Solo and Jack Ryan sports a dark suit with light blue shirt and a stare.

The stare that in the first few minutes makes you think:

A) He's in pain. To him, this interview feels like he's undergoing a root canal. B) He is sizing you up.

It's a stare that is sometimes broken by that famous endearing smirk, which is actually his lopsided smile. After a while, you conclude that it's nothing personal. You just happen to be sitting directly across the actor and is therefore the unwitting focus of those hazel eyes. Apparently, this is the way Ford behaves in most interviews "which he does graciously but grudgingly," according to an AP reporter.

Crooked smile

Another reporter, Barry Koltnow, goes as far as saying that Ford "is perhaps the toughest interview in Hollywood. It's not that he is a mean interview, like Tommy Lee Jones. Or a flaky interview, like Roseanne. And he's certainly not an openly hostile-to-journalists interview, like, well, pick a name."

But Ford, who is a Golden Globe Cecile B. DeMille Lifetime Achievement awardee, is an interviewer's dream when it comes to transcribing the interview from the tape afterward. All because he speaks slowly (his lips hardly move, like a ventriloquist's), so following and typing his words is a breeze.

Ford's face does occasionally brighten up when he breaks into his crooked smile and delivers quips like this about Josh Hartnett, his young co-star in the action-packed "Hollywood Homicide," where they play mismatched detective partners: "The more Josh felt he didn't understand what he was talking about, the better it was for the film."

This elicits laughter from the eight journalists in a room in the Beverly Hills.

Challenging Hartnett

You totally empathize then with Josh, who in an earlier interview narrated how his first meeting with the iconic actor went. "I was a little bit nervous trying to get over the fact that I'm working with Harrison Ford," he said. "You have a job to do but Harrison, unfortunately, doesn't make it easier. He's kind of a tough guy. He likes to put people off, challenge them, and he was definitely doing that to me.

"Harrison, Joe Roth ('Hollywood Homicide' executive producer) and I went out to lunch. I show up two minutes late. As I walk toward the restaurant, I look over my right. Harrison Ford is sitting with sunglasses in his little car and I go, crap, it's for real, I'm actually going to meet Harrison Ford. He came in, introduced himself, and proceeded to sit there and not talk very much at all for the next hour. I didn't say anything either. I was just too terrified. So it's good that we got to know each other quite a bit more before we actually started shooting.

"But then, it started again when we started shooting. He gave me more grief, more crap."

Short sentences

Asked for an example on how Ford can give grief, Hartnett revealed, "He gave me a hard time about my hair. He goes, detectives aren't allowed hair that long. The way he said it, the way he kept going over it made me feel insecure all the time. I had to politely tell him that yoga instructors do have long hair (Hartnett's detective character teaches yoga on the side). If you want to fight about it, I'll be outside."

It probably did not help matters that in the pair's chase scene, Hartnett crashed their car. Ford pulled a groin muscle while Hartnett suffered from whiplash.

Okay, so Hartnett is not going out for dinner tonight with Ford and Flockhart at Spago, but the co-stars have not become mortal enemies, either. Did Ford give him advice?

"He's not the kind of guy who will come right out and try and give you the wisdom of the world," Hartnett said. "He likes to use short sentences. He doesn't want to give away too much. I'm that way, too, but I talk a little more. So you just have to learn from him by watching him."

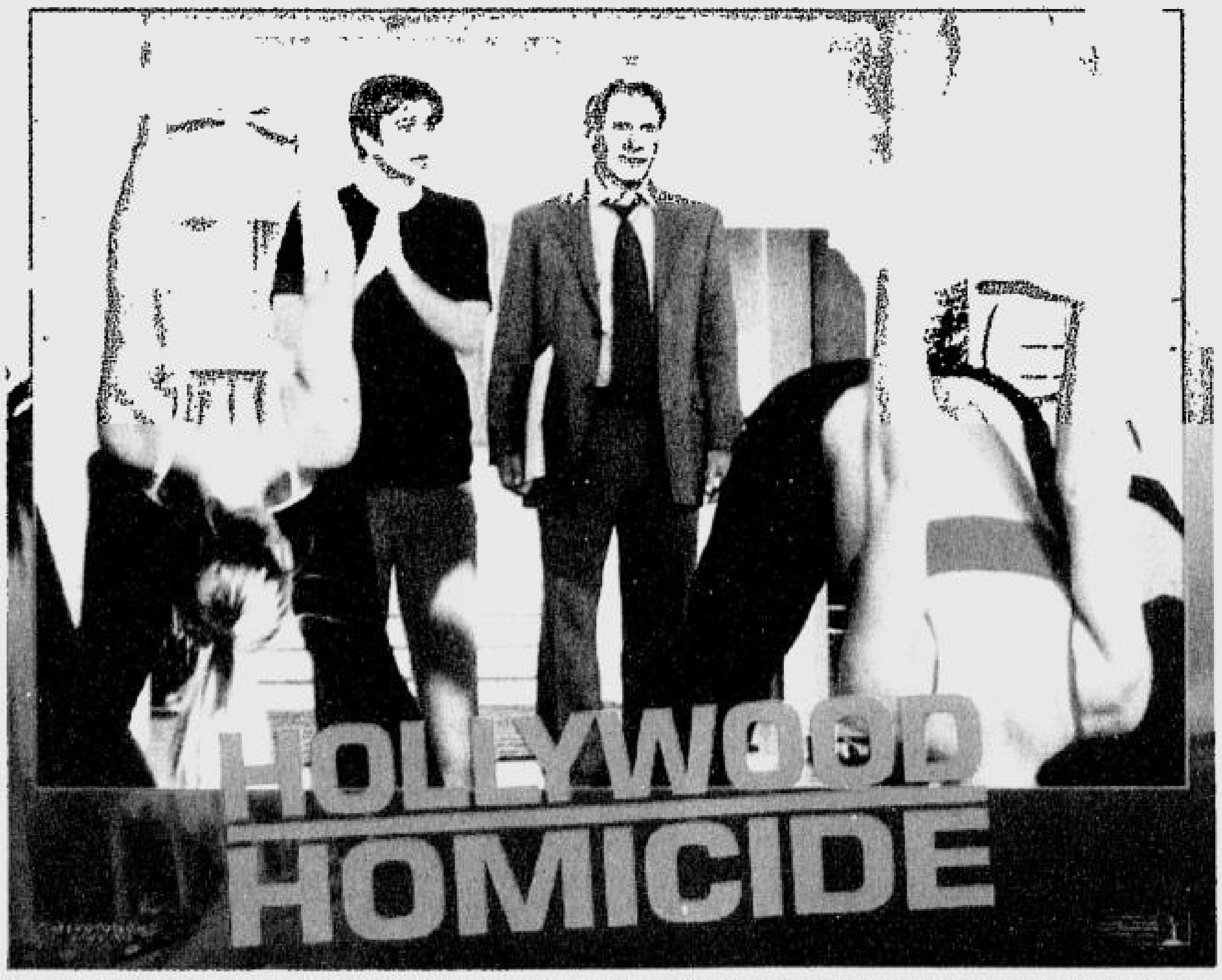
Good chemistry

Ford, after being told that Hartnett confessed how he was intimidated by working with the Harrison Ford, is asked in turn what his take is on co-starring with Hartnett.

He flashes that goofy grin and replies, "How was it working with the Josh Hartnett? He was fine. He was great. He's a very hardworking, serious actor. He has his own ideas about how to run his career. He's very particular about his material and his process. I wish him the best of luck. He's very good in the film and the chemistry between our two characters is very good. It was fun to work with him."

Did he have to help Josh overcome his nervousness about working with him in order to get the work done?

"Sometimes you have to help him get over it and get on with the work," Harrison offers as he massages his forehead. "And sometimes you just leave that tension in. Because in this case, it works for the part. These are not two guys who are on equal footing. One is a veteran and the other is inexperienced."



COPS AND MOONLIGHTERS. With Josh Hartnett as his beat partner who is also a yoga instructor, Ford's character is also a real estate man.

Homage to L.A.

The actors' characters in "Hollywood Homicide" are as disparate as their ages. Ford is 61 while Josh is 25.

The young cop/old cop team, newly paired, investigates the murders of a rap act. In between chases, the two Hollywood dicks pursue other careers. Ford is Joe Gavilan, who moonlights as a realtor, while Hartnett takes on second and third careers as a yoga instructor and a wannabe actor.

Also playing a cop, albeit in drag, is Lou Diamond Phillips. No, the Filipino-American actor doesn't portray a cop whose other job is a streetwalker. In a too-brief cameo role, Lou dresses up to hunt for information he can relay to Ford's character.

The action scenes are filmed in L.A.'s landmarks as director Ron Shelton's homage to the city he grew up in and loves. Shelton earned acclaim for "Bull Durham," his first directorial job.

Ford has so much faith in Shelton that in a first for the actor, he signed on without seeing a script. So when a reporter starts asking a question with "When you read the script . . . ," Ford immediately declares, "I didn't read the script."

> 'Indiana Jones 4' starts filming in summer of 2004. 'The character is a lot of fun to play with. I'm very happy about it.'

He clasps his hands and continues, "There was no script. There were only a few rough pages so I committed on the basis of the concept of the film. I thought, with Ron Shelton writing and this concept, which is a really strong concept, I though we'd be all right."

Robert Souza, who was an L.A. police detective for 22 years (he worked on the late porn king John Holmes murder case, set to be told in the film "Wonderland"), eventually cowrote the script with Shelton.

Carpenter days

The concept about a cop in LA pitching this mansion in Hollywood Hills while walking in a pool of blood at a murder scene is nothing new to Ford. "I know it's weird out there," he says. "I know just how crazy it is. I've researched policemen about five times for different films so I've heard the stories before. I wasn't surprised. This business about cops being able to take their overtime and convert it into time off and pursue another career is, as far as I know, unique to Los Angeles. I've worked with cops who are actors, tennis coaches or pool men before so I knew all about that."

When he was a carpenter, did he also thrust his actor bio and glossies to show biz clients?

"No, I never did that. I started out as an actor and then I stopped acting because I didn't want to do episodic television anymore. I wanted to work in films. I became a carpenter. I never mixed the two. I was trying to convince people that I was a carpenter, not an actor. I wanted them to believe I was serious about carpentry."

Did they take his skills with hammer and saw seriously?

"Yes, they actually did. The first job I had was a recording studio for Sergio Mendez in his backyard in Encino. I never worked for anybody but rich people, doing the kind of work that they wanted to do so, I was very lucky there."

Indiana Jones 4

Since he became a superstar, cops, waiters and so on must be pitching to him all the time.

"It happens all the time," he confirms. "People always come up to me and say, I have a great idea for the next 'Indiana Jones' and sometimes try to give me a script."

Well, news flash, folks, stop pounding those scripts for "Indiana Jones 4." There is already an approved script.

Our hero himself states, "I'm looking forward to that. We'll start filming in late summer of 2004. The character is a lot of fun to play with. I'm working with Steven (Spielberg, in case you've been living in isolation) so that's always fun for me. I'm very happy about it."

He utters the understatement of the year: "It is eagerly anticipated."

Improvised scene

In the meantime, there's this "Hollywood Homicide" role that has him humming and briefly swaying to a Motown classic.

"That's what I grew up on," he admits. "So it's the music I know best."

In a love scene with Lena Olin, People's "Sexiest Man Alive" in 1998 ends up with a . . . doughnut?

It's a playful take on the old stereotype that American cops love doughnuts, although these days, they are more likely to be found at the neighborhood Starbucks.

"The scene was largely improvised," Ford comments, lightly tugging at the tablecloth. "Lena happened to be wearing a scarf. So I suggested that she playfully tie it around my eyes and then we invented the rest of it to expand from there. There was an atmosphere that allowed for invention, collaboration and imagination. That's due to Ron being secure as a director."

Lena, playing a radio psychic and cop groupie, offers yet another glimpse on Ford: "He's a very sweet man. He's not uptight about being Harrison Ford because he is Harrison Ford. He doesn't have to pretend that he is Harrison Ford, which is a big relief. He's all about (for the sake of) the movie. And he knows that all the catering to and the pampering to is for the (sake of the) movie, which is also a big relief."

Flying passion

At this stage in Ford's career, is there still a director that he would like to work with?

"I'm not that kind of person who thinks, before I die, I got to work with this director just because I like a film that he made. It's a very practical process for me. It's a combination of the director and material and what I feel like doing at that particular time.

"I'm not the kind if person who wants to do Hamlet before I die, for example."

He may not be dying to do Hamlet but he loves other challenges: riding around in his Harley-Davidsons and piloting his helicopters and planes.

About the latter passion, he explains, "It was a challenge to learn a whole new discipline, all the rules and regulations, about navigation, the things you have to learn to get a pilot's license. It's important as you get older to challenge yourself and continue to learn things and not just be satisfied with things you learned 20 years ago."

He landed in the news for piloting one of his six helicopters to rescue lost and injured hikers in Wyoming, where he has a ranch. He confirms, though, that he now lives in L.A. most of the time.

"My kids are in school here," discloses the star whose younger brother, Terence, is also

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Ces Drilon, coup veteran

From page C2

She had been seen and heard on TV screaming, "*Puwesto namin 'yan, puwesto namin 'yan,*" just before the juniors military officers started their news conference. She was also described as being like "a market vendor."

"*Alam mo naman sa mga* coverage *na ganyan, kailangan mam-braso ka talaga,*" she says.

Still, Drilon feels that throughout the Oakwood coverage, she was able to remain calm, "unlike before, when I was so excitable.

"I really enjoyed myself that Sunday," she adds, and laughs. "How bad, '*no*? At the expense of others."

In October, her "Pipol" will be celebrating its 4th anniversary. Drilon says her job of interviewing people from all walks of life for the weekly program has taught her to be more sympathetic and understanding of other people, even the taxi drivers and bus conductors. She has done the profile of practically every personality in the country except one -- Danding Cojuangco, whom she describes as a very enigmatic personality.

Her son Ory is now 17, while Miko is 16. Gian is 13 and Luigi is 10. Of the four boys, the eldest seems to be the one following in her footsteps, the proud mom says. Ory is an editor of the Ateneo school paper, "Hi-Lites."

How does she distribute her time among her roles as mother, wife and broadcast journalist? "With great difficulty," she answers. "As much as possible, I try to spend my weekends with the children. If I need to be somewhere, I bring them along if I can."

Her husband, artist Rock Drilon, who manages mag.net, their chain of magazine-cum-art shops, is very supportive of her career, she says. Her husband tells her he would even be the first one to drive her to the site when the bullets start flying, even when her life is in danger. "That is a joke, of course," she says.

Plotting a digital coup

From page C2

his Filmless Films Inc., Cinema as Art Movement, Mowelfund Film Institute, CCP Freefest, Black Soup, Core24, Furball.

Check out screening venues -- Brash Young Cinema, Titus Brandsma, UP Film Center, CCP Sineklab, and the National Commission on Culture and Arts Cine Club.

Scan the media and surf the 'Net for contacts, trends, and happenings.

"Your digital camera will not turn you into an instant Von Trier, Figgis, or Soderbergh," said Khavn.

"Your attitude towards filmmaking should be that of an amateur: half-serious, playful, light, not heavy, thus without baggage. There are no mistakes. The important thing is you learn and discover what makes your work stand out among the gazillion films already made and being produced by the minute."

Khavn's website: www.indieman.com

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	NENA INOCENTE
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	NENA INOCENTE
B	SNAKE LADY
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	NOON AT NGAYON
CINEMA-2	NENA INOCENTE
CINEMA-3	BEHIND GREEN DOOR
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BAD BOYS 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TOMB RAIDER 2
CINEMA-6	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-7	KEKA
CINEMA-8	BABASAGIN KRISTAL
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LXG
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ITALIAN JOB
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	FINDING NEMO
CINEMA-12	VIEW FROM THE TOP
CINEMA-14	ALEX & EMMA
CINEMA-15	[illegible]
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
(LAS PINAS)	[illegible]
CINEMA-1	NOON AT NGAYON
CINEMA-2	IMPOSTOR
CINEMA-4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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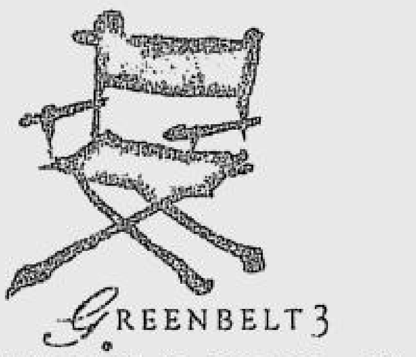

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Something so right gone so wrong

By Ruben M. Cruz Jr.

NO TENSION, no fun. Captain Nemo (right) sees action.

I HAVE no illusions of being a highbrow film critic. I'm just a guy who likes to go to the movies. I write about them mostly because it makes me feel good, the money isn't bad, and I occasionally get invited to advance screenings, which means I don't have to pay for expensive tickets, and I can brag to my friends that I saw something first.

Very selfish reasons they may be, but we've all got our vices.

As a child, I was always expecting to be bowled over by a wonderful story every time I entered a theater. I realize now, of course, that rarely does a film fulfill such high expectations. Still, you have to stay open to surprises. There's always hope.

Well, "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen" really got me hoping. Adapted from the comic-book novels of two cult legends, writer Alan Moore and illustrator Kevin O'Neill, the film, as far as potential is concerned, has one of the most illustrious pedigrees in Hollywood. Its characters are all culled from some of the most captivating 19th century novels.

The League includes Allan Quatermain from H. Rider Haggard's "King Solomon's Mines," Dorian Gray from Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray," The Invisible Man from H.G. Wells' novel of the same title, Dr. Jekyll and his evil alter-ego Mr. Hyde from Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," Captain Nemo from Jules Verne's "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea," Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer, and Mina Harker from Bram Stoker's "Dracula."

The film's villains are just as capable of attracting genuine curiosity. There's the infamous Professor James Moriarty ("The Napoleon of crime") from Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Final Problem," and The Phantom, whose mask makes him right at home in Gaston Leroux's "The Phantom Of The Opera."

One can actually build a film, several films in fact, out of the individual stories of each of the heroes and villains in this movie, and indeed, that has already been done with most if not all of them.

REVIEW

> The compelling comic book characters are reduced to running around and intoning hackneyed lines

Excellent idea

For instance, "King Solomon's Mines," has been made into a movie three times already, the last one in 1985, with Richard Chamberlain as Quatermain and a young Sharon Stone as the woman who hires him for one last African expedition. Wells' "The Invisible Man" has at least 11 cinematic translations, from the 1933 Claude Rains classic of the same title to "Hollow Man," which featured Kevin Bacon and Elizabeth Shue three years ago. And Stevenson's Jekyll and Hyde has inspired at least 15 films, not to mention a host of adult film versions (they're actually quite entertaining) and cartoon features (the one with Bugs Bunny is my favorite).

Making a comic book with classic literary figures as superheroes is simply an excellent idea, and translating the comic book into film is an even better one. With the depth of the characters involved and the available technology, filmmakers can definitely spin one very good story.

Uninspired instrument

They can, but they don't. If there's a hall of fame for underachieving films, "LXG" has got to be a shoo-in. All I could think of while watching the film is how something so right could go so wrong. It's hard to believe that this is actually the movie in the heads of screenplay writer James Dale Robinson and director Stephen Norrington ("Blade") when they set out to make it. If it is, then it's just too bad, because those who have read the comic books of Moore and O'Neill have the real movie in their heads, and it's not this.

"LXG" is just a series of flashy vignettes that misses, by a mile, the points about human nature that the comic book authors were trying to make.

Did the filmmakers and the producers of "LXG" have such a low opinion of the audience that they think all we want from the comic books are spectacular visuals and fight scenes, with no story to make them all coherent? Have today's audiences lost all interest in anything except mayhem, or do the filmmakers and producers just assume they have?

Granted that they are right in their assumptions about most moviegoers, "LXG" doesn't do anything to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that all the digital magic in the world could provide that sense of spectacle better than the technical drawing and coloring pens of comic book authors. Technology cannot take the place of imagination; it is only an instrument of it, and here that instrument is uninspired.

There's nothing special about the special effects in the film. They're all pretty much generic and sometimes, even downright silly. Captain Nemo's Nautilus could have been an anorexic Titanic cruising the open seas for all I care, and the scenes in Venice could be anywhere but there.

The (special) effects may work enough to service the film's roller-coaster ride of jumping from action to action, but one feels no tension and no fun. "LXG" is full of sound-and-fury sequences signifying nothing. It takes a special kind of viewer to sit through it without searching a little desperately for the exit signs.

Hackneyed lines

I pity the actors caught in the midst of this debacle. At 72 years old, Sean Connery (Quatermain) should really be watching out for his legacy. He cannot afford to be involved in a movie that becomes bothersome after the first five minutes and incomprehensible after 10. Stuart Townsend as the narcissist Gray and Peta Wilson as the vampire Harker both exude charisma and they do what they can with their roles, but they really can't do much given the dialogue.

Here, the compelling characters of the comic book are reduced to being actors running around and intoning hackneyed lines like, "May this new century be yours son, as the old one was mine!" (That's Quatermain addressing Sawyer.)

What's more, they're put in situations that insult one's imagination, not to mention common sense. Since when, for instance, have vampires been able to cast their reflections on a mirror and walk in the daylight?

I know. Now I'm sounding like the highbrow critic I said I wasn't. I'm sorry. What have I become? I'd like to think I'm still that child looking for that wonderful story told in the cozy darkness of a theatre. Perhaps only a bit older, but just as hopeful.

'The toughest interview in Hollywood'

From page C4

an actor. "So I spend the school year here."

Virtual dad

Malcolm, 16, and Georgia, 12, are his kids with Melissa Mathison, whom he separated from in 2001. They met on the Philippine set of "Apocalypse Now," where he played Col. Lucas while Mathison was director Francis Ford Coppola's executive assistant and rumored lover.

With his first wife, Mary Marquardt, Harrison has two children, Ben, 36, and Willard, 34. Ben and Willard have a son each so that makes Ford a "*lolo*" (grandfather) to two boys.

And he is a virtual dad to Liam, Calista's two-year-old adopted son. The three live in Ford's home.

A reporter thought that Ford moved from rustic Wyoming to L.A. for the first time, so he asks him if he experienced culture shock.

"I started out living here," Ford clarifies. "I grew up in Chicago. I came out here. I lived here for 15 years before I moved to Wyoming."

Then he deadpans, "It was a culture shock moving to Wyoming. I kept waiting to find culture. I couldn't find it."

No award worries

He clears up another misconception: "I never had animosity toward Hollywood. When I moved out of Hollywood, people invented the story that I hated Hollywood and was running away from Hollywood, and all this stuff is not true."

You can sit through even the few clunkers that Ford has made because he is a damn good actor and is always interesting to watch. So you ask Ford, who is one of the finest actors of our generation, with one Oscar nomination and several Golden Globe nominations to his name, how he feels about not having won an award for best actor.

"It's not something that bothers me or haunts me," he shrugs those Harrison Ford shoulders. "It would be nice (to win) someday but it's not something that I worry about."

A publicist comes to claim him. But at the door, as he pauses and suddenly looms like Indiana Jones, Han Solo and Jack Ryan all at the same time, he says, "Thank you very much. Bye-bye."

E-mail the author at rnepales57@aol.com.

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Licad on tour: The view backstage

LICAD

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

WHAT goes on behind the standing ovation and the autograph-signing in a typical Cecile Licad concert?

First, you get a first-hand view of the pianist's concern about the sound of her piano, her worry about not getting the instrument of her choice. So she makes do with whatever is available from local sources.

SHOW STOPPER

She will not compromise with her sound and it pains her that in asking for a better instrument, she makes gentle demands on people close to her and they literally scramble to look for the right piano in "bodegas."

Recently, she was faced with three possibilities—the Philamlife piano which has enough power but needs fuller voicing; the Lyric semi-concert grand which would do fairly well in a solo recital but would mostly likely be less effective in a concerto for orchestra; and a baby three-fourth grand from a cultural institution.

She would not sacrifice power but she was also concerned with nuances. Weighing all the factors, she decided that the Philamlife piano was still the better choice with a few adjustments.

What people didn't know after that standing ovation for her SaintSaens concerto at the Philamlife Theater recently was that Licad was interrupting her rehearsals, miserably looking for good pianos from available sources. She has worked all her life since age five to give her county a good name in the music world and she can't even have the instrument of her choice.

In a country preoccupied with coup hearings and the threat of another putsch, no one realizes that a world-class pianist needs an equally world-class instrument.

Last Monday, a semi-concert Yamaha grand from Lyric Piano travelled four hours from Manila to the Science City in Munoz, Nueva Ecija. It was first tested by Rosario Licad, then two-time NAMCYA winner Oliver Salonga, and then transported to Philamlife for the pianist's final assessment.

At the Philippine Carabao Center Conference Hall in Muñoz, Licad got three standing ovations for her Beethoven, Debussy, Schumann and Chopin, and obliged with three encores.

Moved to tears, Muñoz Mayor Nestor Alvarez and the city council made a resolution declaring Licad an adopted daughter of Muñoz.

On Wednesday, Aug. 27, at the Mother Madeleine Hall of St. Paul University in Tuguegarao City, Licad makes her last provincial engagement. She goes back to New York soon after.

Amid coups, corruption, and the rise and fall of governments, the profound music of Cecile Licad makes us realize that this country is still worth loving and fighting for. A Japanese ticket buyer said that for all the natural and man-made calamities afflicting this country, it need not be classified third world since it has produced the likes of Cecile Licad.

The program for the Aug. 27 performance of Licad at St. Paul University in Tuguegarao City: Beethoven 's Sonata op. 81 (Les Adieux), Debussy 's Estampes, Schumann 's Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22 and Chopin 's 24 Preludes. Tickets available at Hotel Roma and the St. Paul University Office of the Director of Performing Arts. Call 0918-7376901.

Weekend of love songs, acoustic and soul

MISALUCHA

SEPT. 5 and 6 will be a weekend of love songs, acoustic hits and a whole lot of soul. These are the dates when Lani Misalucha performs in the two-day concert at the PICC, dubbed "Lani Misalucha In Symphony." Soul Queen Jaya and Mr. Acoustic Paolo Santos will be her guests on Friday, Sept. 5. Songbird Regine Velasquez will take her turn on Sept. 6.

SHOW TIME

No less than Lani herself is thrilled at the prospect of performing with Regine, Jaya and Paolo.

"Regine and I have been good friends since way back, and I have the utmost regard for her staying power," says Lani. "Jaya is definitely a complete performer. It's not just her singing style, but her comic flair, her timing... I guess it's in the genes," she adds of the daughter of singer-comedian Elizabeth Ramsey.

"As for Paolo," she says, "I'm happy that he found his calling. Besides, it's really nice to listen to just acoustic guitar and voice."

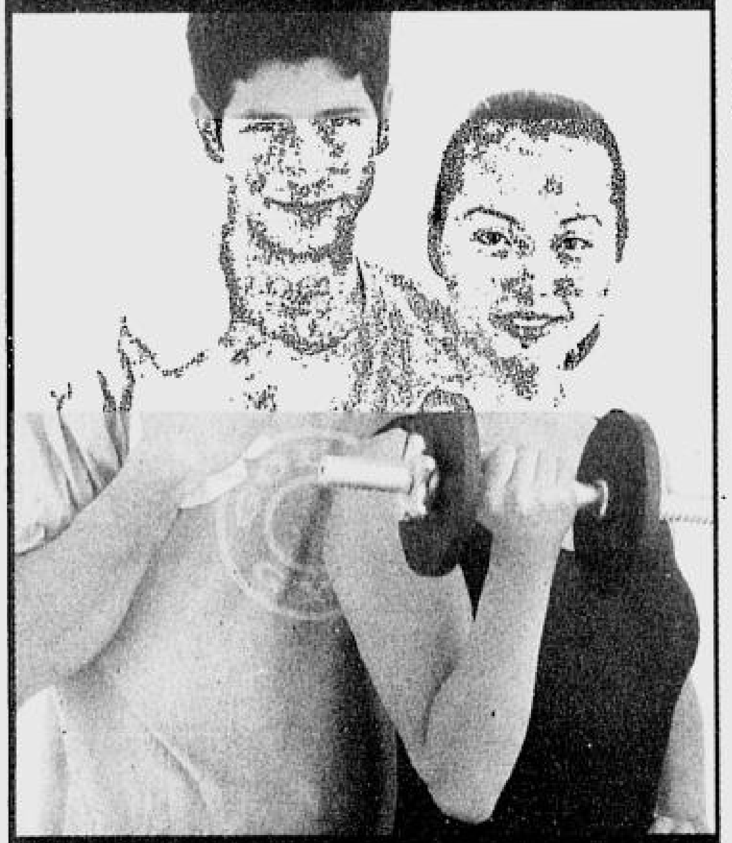
Lani recently won the Aliw Award for Best Major Concert for a Female Artist for her concert at the Araneta Coliseum last February.

"Lani Misalucha In Symphony" marks a departure from Lani's usual concerts. Her chameleon-like voice will get the chance to shine to the accompaniment of the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra, with Louie Ocampo as musical director and conductor.

"But it's not just an all-classical repertoire," Lani says. "We'll still be using a regular rhythm section, so we can still swing from jazz to rock and even some techno."

Presented by Wilbros Entertainment, "Lani Misalucha In Symphony" is sponsored by Rado of Switzerland at Montre and Livoncel (Multivitamins+Minerals), in association with Westin Philippine Plaza, Philippine Star, Manila Bulletin and Tapa King.

Tickets are available at Wilbros Entertainment, 374-2222 and 374-9999, and all major National Bookstore Ticketworld outlets, 891-5610.



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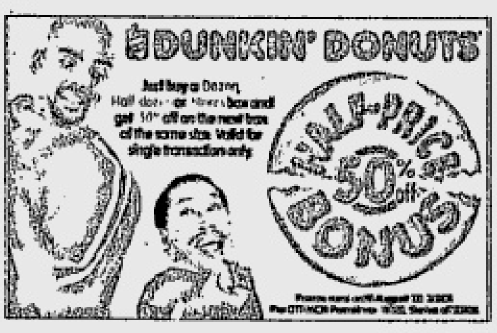
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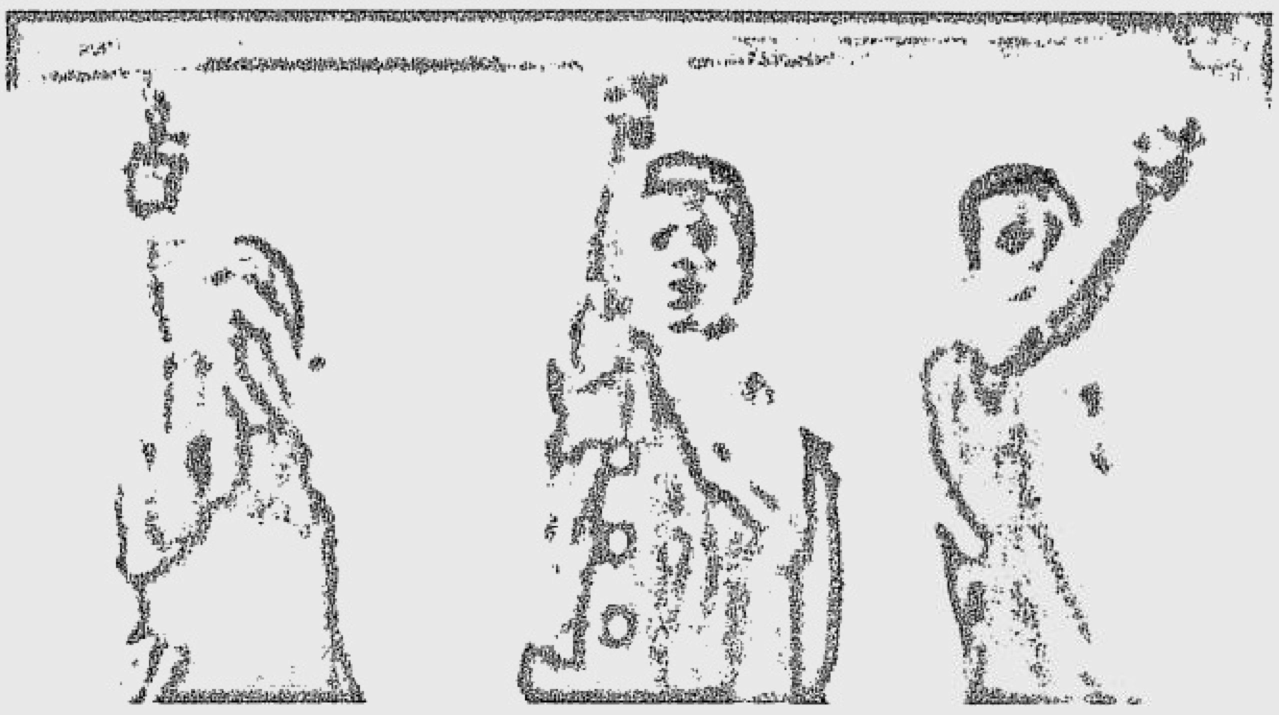
5TH CINEMANILA GRAND JURY PRIZE

A Brazil director's epic of the slums



PORTRAIT of a wretched humanity in a world of post-Tarantino violence

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE OPENING shot is a winner: white metallic flashes on screen gradually revealed to be machetes being sharpened.

So, when "Cidade de Deus" (City of God) won the Grand Jury Prize at the 5th Cinemanila International Film Festival last Thursday, it was a foregone conclusion.

Done on a $3-million budget by Brazilian filmmaker Fernando Meirelles with the collaboration of Katia Lund, it has a huge cast of nonactors recruited from the sprawling City of God, a godforsaken housing project in Rio de Janiero.

"There are 180,000 people living there," says Meirelles. "It's a very violent place. But it's now getting better because of the social programs."

He says the book on which the film was based has 250 characters, but they have reduced that to 90 for the film, with hundreds of extras to spare. All joined forces to por-

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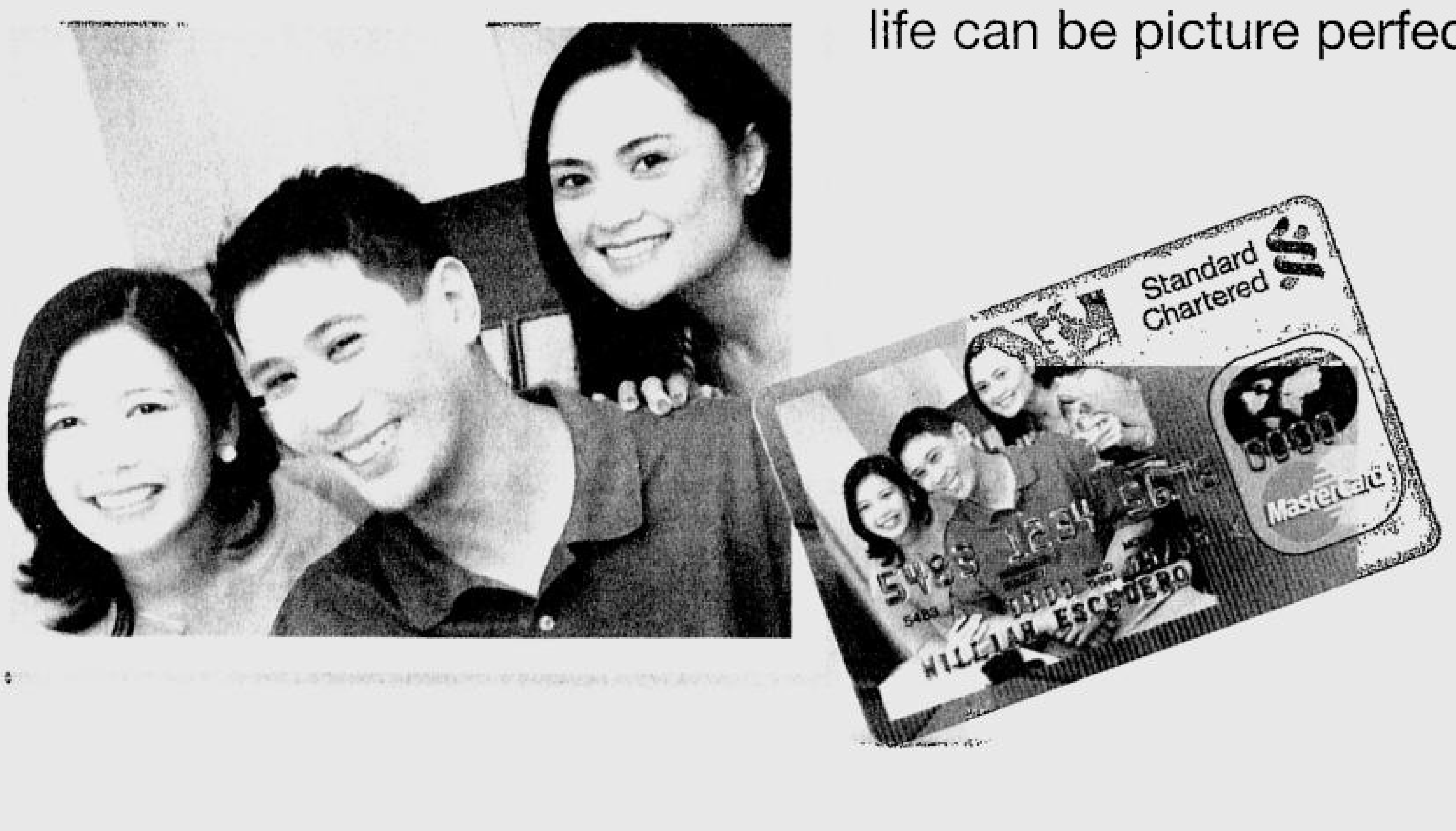

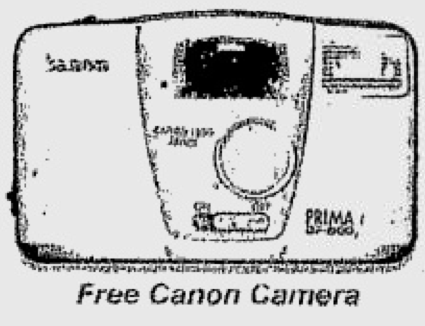

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For Christine Hakim, art and life are indivisible

Indonesia's 'national actress' just received the Lifetime Achievement Award from Cinemanila. And Time magazine has chosen her as one of this year's Asian Heroes. Here's why

By Constantino C. Tejero

THAT unforgettable opening scene of Garin Nugroho's "Leaf on a Pillow," Best Picture winner in the 1st Cinemanila International Film Festival, shows a slattern looking for her safety pins, and the camera pans to a corner where three street urchins are sticking them into their faces as fashion statement.

When Christine Hakim, who won Best Actress for that film, strides into a Greenbelt restaurant in a maroon shawl and with blue-green streaks on her long brushed-up hair, one is struck by how actually youthful-looking she is—a far cry from the dowdy foster mother of street children in that 1998 Indonesian film.

She has just come from a screening of Ditsi Carolino's "Riles," winner of Best Documentary in this year's Cinemanila. The docu reminds her of "Leaf on a Pillow," and she can't praise it enough. She wants the international audience to see it.

She marvels particularly at the railroad squatters' singing amid wretchedness and squalor, and gushes over the Filipino talent and skill for singing.

"Can you imagine if people with this skill who live in the *riles* were given the opportunity?" she exclaims. "I think it's a sin not to give them a chance... They're much poorer in India, yet they keep their dignity. Why is it?"

She concludes it's a cultural thing, since most cultures instill in people the ideal of keeping one's dignity intact even in the face of misery, adversity, even death.

The filming of "Leaf on a Pillow" in Yogyakarta in central Java was the first time she was really exposed to this subculture of the *anak-anakan jalana* (the filmmaker used real street children).

Since then, she says she couldn't sleep well, and had nightmares. She would ask herself, How can this be happening in my country?

After the filming, she adopted three of the street kids who acted in the film. Two lived in her house while the third she made her music scholar.

But when she went to Australia for the post-production and stayed there for two months, the two kids disappeared from her house. They left a note saying how they appreciated her generosity but didn't want to bother her and her family, and they wanted to decide for their future.

As she relates this part of the letter, tears well in her eyes. She says that, after experiencing complete freedom in the streets, the kids can no longer live a normal life. She likens it to putting saltwater fish into freshwater (it will die).

Social conscience

That galvanized her conscience. She put up foundations to help people in her own way.

"People today are not sensitive enough," she says. "The government has also a lot of problems. And every leader of every political party just wants to win in the elections. I'm not interested in politics. I'm nonpartisan. I've learned that politicians, at the end, can't do anything except to keep their parties alive."

After the film's screening at the Tokyo International Film Festival, where it won the Special Jury Prize, the Japanese government donated a supply of milk for West Javanese children, coursing it through the Christine Hakim Foundation. Some 600 children under six years of age are being given milk five times a week for five years now.

But this wasn't the first time her acting career got enmeshed with the lives of the deprived. Earlier, while filming "The Victim," in which she plays the role of a retired prostitute, she did research in a brothel camp half an hour's drive from Yogyakarta.

They shot there for three months, and that was how she learned about the lives of these women, until her director commented she was starting to assume their looks and mannerism.

"In the beginning there was some distance," she recalls, "but at the end you became familiar with it. These are people one should not judge as immoral..."

She entered the movies in 1973, when she was 16. As early as 1975, she started starring in films dealing with social issues such as poverty, discrimination, political oppression.

"My concern is with the next generation, not with this generation," she says. "I cannot live in the sky, like a star. I'm a human

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A Brazil director's epic of the slums

From page D1

tray a wretched humanity in a world of post-Tarantino violence.

Meirelles shot in 55 mm mixed with 16 mm, used both negatives, transferred them to high-definition and did color correction, edited on video, then back to film for final printing.

So you have these disintegrating images drained of color on screen, dominated by an arid brown both yellowish and reddish—the hues of dust and clay tinged with red earth.

This would look like an offspring of the Latin American neorealism heralded by Hector Babenco's "Pixote" in the early 1980s. But Meirelles would be the first to deny any perceived influence of Babenco on his filmmaking.

"He is more classical, the way he shoots and prepares his actors," he says. "He really controls everything, from the framing to the camera movement, the lens used, to the color of the actor's shirt. I like a technique that's more improvisatory."

Rather, he'd go for British filmmakers Mike Leigh and Ken Loach. And Pasolini, of course, Antonioni, a little of Fellini, a couple of Bergman (one of them "Autumn Sonata").

For the Oscars

The 47-year-old Meirelles didn't go to film school, but studied architecture in the University of São Paulo. He started as an experimental video filmmaker for independent productions, and did children's films, TV reports, commercials. He particularly loves doing camera editing.

Censorship of sex and laxity on violence in film baffles him. "You can't make love but you can kill. It's really something I can't get."

He says has had no problem with the government regarding "Cidade de Deus," specifically its portrayal of social squalor, violence and drug-dealing. Two weeks before its release in Brazil, the press was talking about it, and both the outgoing and incoming administrations were endorsing it, so it became a hit.

FERNANDO Meirelles, on the crest of Latin American neorealism

"It was $7 million, with 3.3 million admissions," he reveals.

He explains 14-year-olds may see the sex romp "Y Tu Mamá También" in Brazil, while only those 16 years and above may watch "Cidade de Deus" since many Rio kids are consuming drugs and thus may get ideas from it.

After it was shown, drug-dealing became an issue in Brazil, he says, although there has been no death threats on him from drug syndicates.

The film was released in the United States in January, with 240 prints (a record for a Brazilian film). But Miramax wants to re-release it in October in time for the Oscars early next year, hoping to enter it in five categories.

A huge project

Meanwhile, Meirelles and his associates have put up Us from the Cinema, a non-government organization giving seminars and workshops every weekend. Some 70 boys involved in the making of the film have joined.

Meirelles has just finished "City of Men," a series of five episodes for TV exploring the stories of two characters from the film.

He is starting on another huge project, this time with a $15-million budget. Titled "Intolerance," the film will consist of five stories set in Brazil, the United States, Kenya, the United Arab Emirates and the Philippines. It is not a remake of or sequel to the D.W. Griffith classic, but only refers to it.

On his way home to Rio from Manila, he is taking with him videos of 15 Filipino films, to study Philippine culture and racial traits. He will return in October, maybe for casting or location-hunting.

He has yet to see a Lino Brocka film.

For Christine Hakim . . .

From page D2

being. I want my feet on the ground."

She tells how her sister would chide her every time she goes out in ordinary clothes, since she's Indonesia's leading actress and as such should play as role model to people.

"But I want to go out wearing slippers," she says earnestly. "I want to go to the public market, where you can directly know people's lives. You're just a human being, after all."

Her foundations subsidize the education of indigent children, help rebuild dilapidated schoolhouses, provide grants and subsidies to impoverished teachers. In fact, a forthcoming film she's producing, "Umbrella Fantasy," tells the story of these teachers.

National cinema

As with any other country, Indonesia has a problem with Hollywood movies killing the local industry. To resist that, she insists one must do it now. "If you want them to dominate, you don't have to do anything."

Her favorite filmmakers are all Asians, including Kurosawa, Zhang Yimou, Im Kwon Taek. "When you see a movie from Iran, or Palestine, you feel it's you, it's your story, you are there."

She can't point out a Hollywood filmmaker or actor she idolizes, although "The Sound of Music" is her all-time favorite movie. "Okay, you can watch it again and again without getting bored."

She believes censorship in film is just as unfeasible as total freedom. What's more important is self-censorship. In Indonesian cinema, she adds, sex is not quite a problem, although sociopolitical criticism was in the time of Suharto.

She met her future husband Jeroen Lezer, an Indo (Dutch-Indonesian mestizo), during the making of the saga "Tropic of Emerald." He was involved in the production, while she had a supporting role in the movie.

In 1997, she established her own production outfit, Christine Hakim Films. It produced "Leaf on a Pillow" at $300,000 five years ago. It will coproduce a musical next year, an updated remake of the 1950s movie "Three Sisters."

"Through film," she says, "I want to build friendship and solidarity among peoples all over the world, especially us Asians."

She has appeared in some 30 films and won numerous awards, enough to get the world's attention. Last year, she sat on the jury of the Cannes International Film Festival, the first Indonesian to do so. This year, Time magazine chose her as one of 20 Asian Heroes. Last Thursday, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the 5th Cinemanila International Film Festival.

And, like the true-blue activist that she is, as a parting shot, she exclaims: "Long live Philippines! Long live Asia!"

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Sept. 18	Sept. 11	Central Luzon	1	
Sept. 18	Sept. 11	South Luzon 1	1	
Sept. 18	Sept. 11	South Luzon 2	1	
Sept. 21	Sept. 14	GMA	3	
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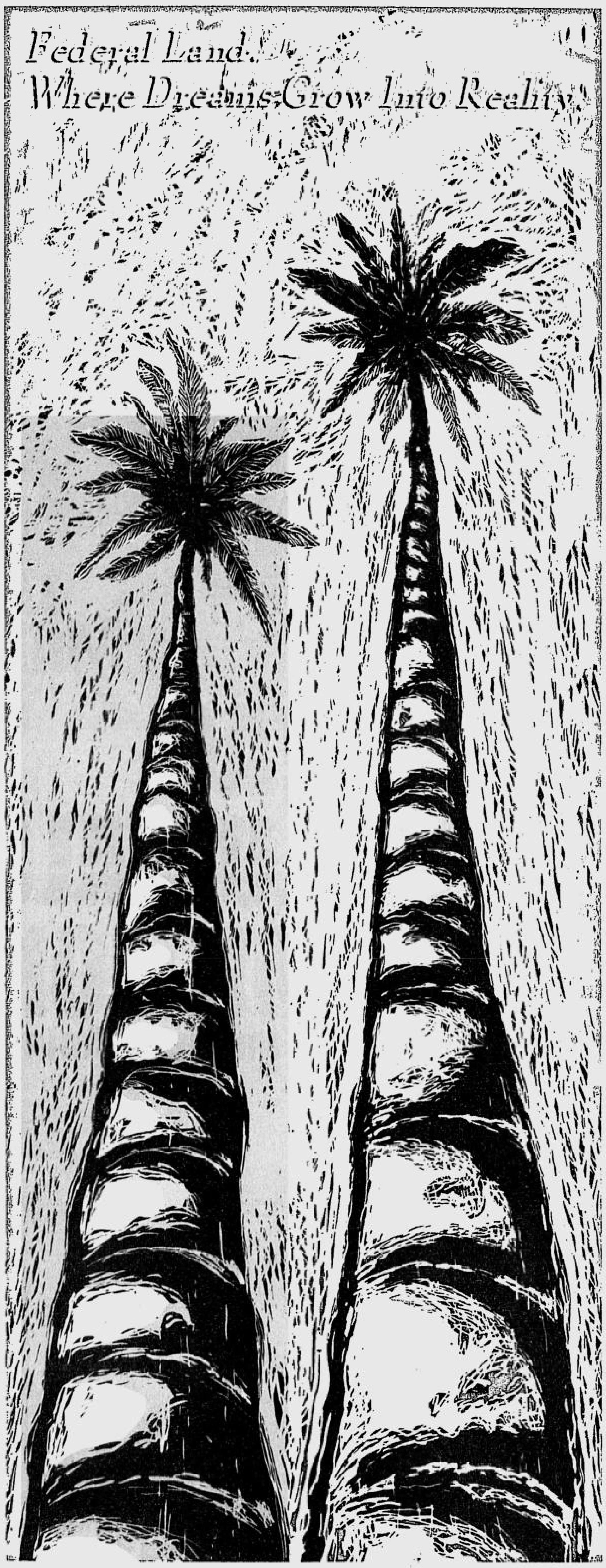
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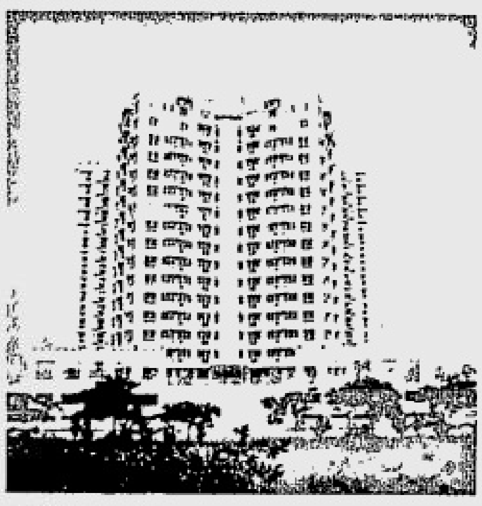

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By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

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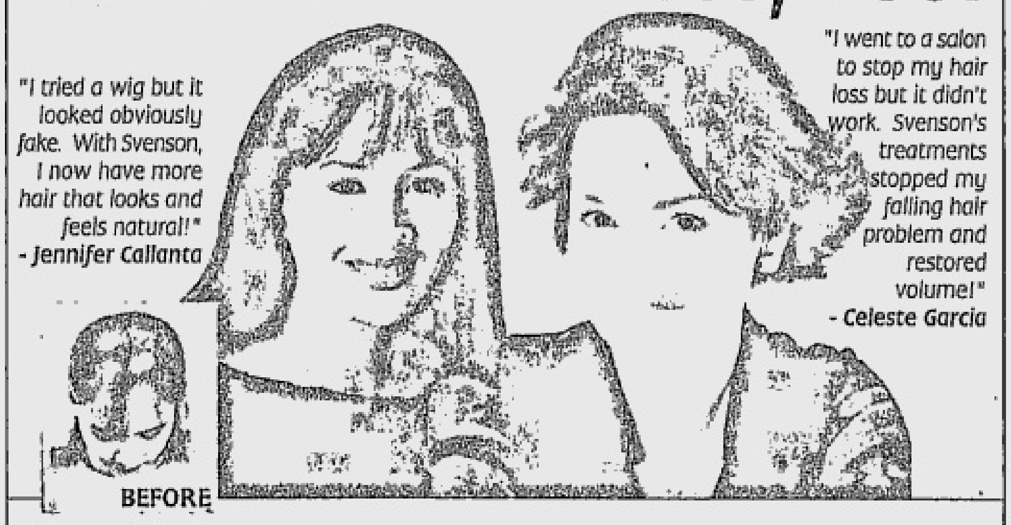

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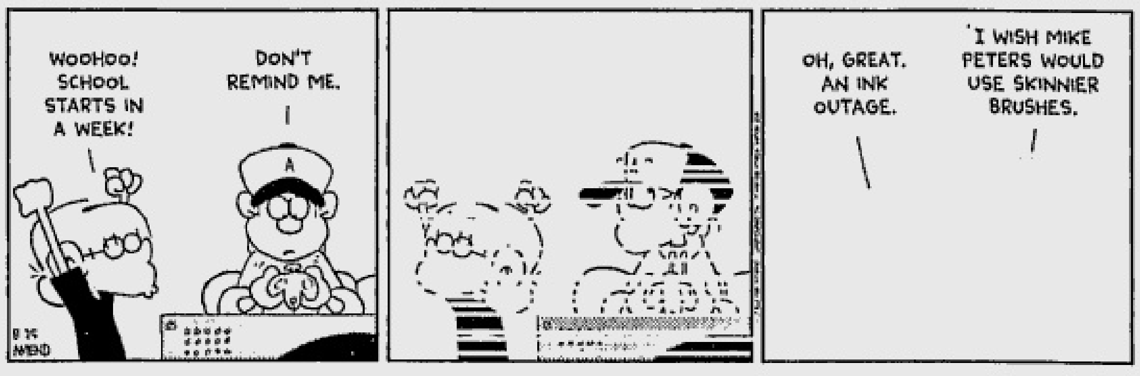
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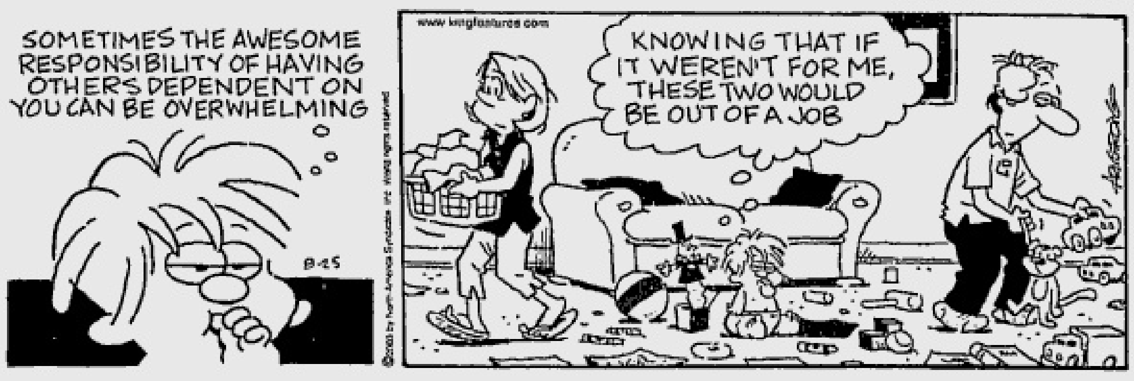
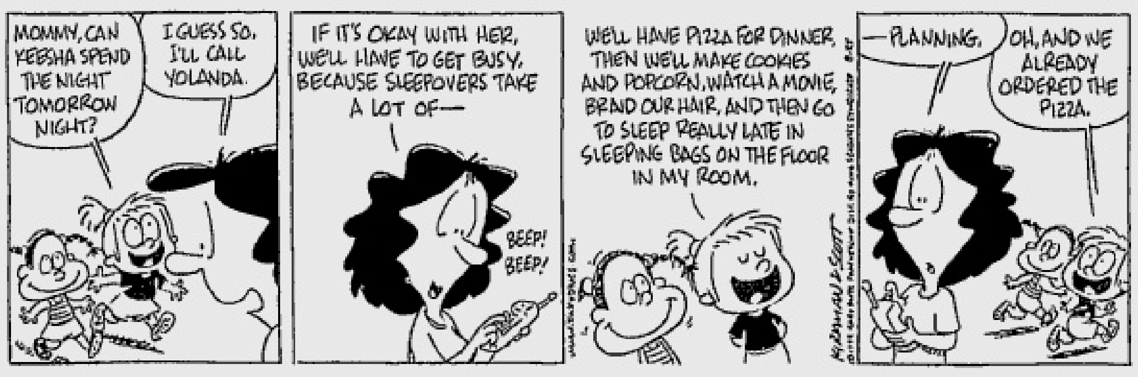
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


SOMETIMES THE AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY OF HAVING OTHERS DEPENDENT ON YOU CAN BE OVERWHELMING
8-25
www.kingfeatures.com
KNOWING THAT IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME, THESE TWO WOULD BE OUT OF A JOB

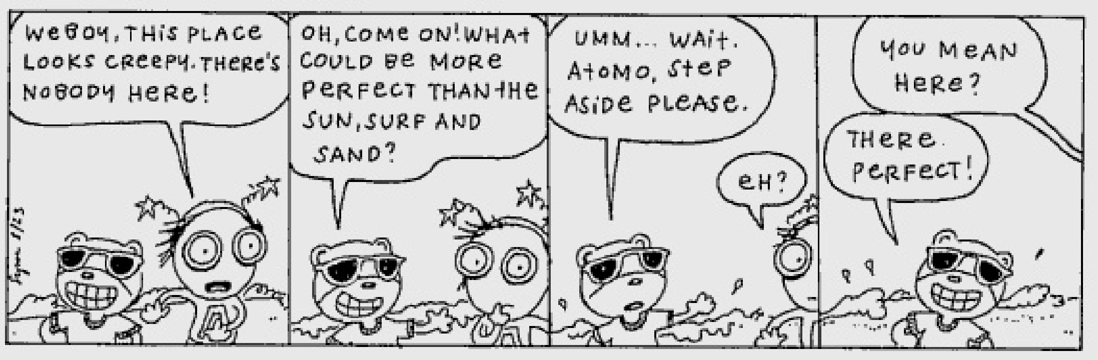
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOMMY, CAN KEESHA SPEND THE NIGHT TOMORROW NIGHT?
I GUESS SO. I'LL CALL YOLANDA.
IF IT'S OKAY WITH HER, WE'LL HAVE TO GET BUSY, BECAUSE SLEEPOVERS TAKE A LOT OF—
BEEP! BEEP!
WE'LL HAVE PIZZA FOR DINNER, THEN WE'LL MAKE COOKIES AND POPCORN, WATCH A MOVIE, BRAID OUR HAIR, AND THEN GO TO SLEEP REALLY LATE IN SLEEPING BAGS ON THE FLOOR IN MY ROOM.
—PLANNING.
OH, AND WE ALREADY ORDERED THE PIZZA.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WEBOY, THIS PLACE LOOKS CREEPY. THERE'S NOBODY HERE!
OH, COME ON! WHAT COULD BE MORE PERFECT THAN THE SUN, SURF AND SAND?
UMM... WAIT. ATOMO, STEP ASIDE PLEASE.
EH?
YOU MEAN HERE?
THERE. PERFECT!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are flamboyant and energetic. You definitely exude sexual charm. You are often very frank and revealing about yourself. You have an active, intelligent mind, and yet, you are very physical. You know how to use charm to your advantage in all social situations. The year ahead focuses on your closest relationships and partnerships. **Birthdate of:** Sean Connery, actor; Tim Burton, director; Althea Gibson, tennis champion/golfer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your creative skills are very strong today, because your imagination knows no bounds. Since you are the artisan of the zodiac, use this to create something.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): A family member probably needs your sympathy or help today. Since you are grounded and sensible, you are the logical person to give it.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Discussions with a female friend or a sister can be meaningful and sympathetic today. Each of you is inclined to confide in the other.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Attend to banking and financial matters today. Tidy up loose details. Figure out exactly where you stand. There's always too much month at the end of the money.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): The Moon is in your sign today, and this makes you feel confident. It's a good way to start the week off. However, confusion is likely when talking to a close friend.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): With Mars and Uranus directly opposite your sign, you might feel in conflict with others. Remember that it takes two to make a fight. Go gently.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Confidential conversation with a friend (probably female) could reveal something secretive or mysterious today. Others often turn to you for advice, don't they?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your boss or someone in authority might ask you to do something that you don't want to do today. Of course, you have to follow the rules, but you don't have to be a martyr.

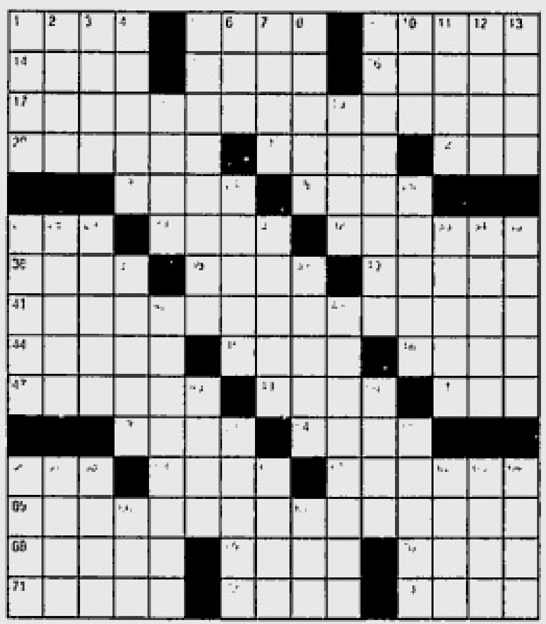
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Don't worry if your mind keeps drifting off into never-never land today. A lot of people are daydreaming today, because Neptune is doing its thing.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): If someone asks you to lend him or her money, wait until Wednesday to make your decision. Right now you are in the mood to rescue others.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Be prepared to go more than halfway in your conversations with others today. Today's Moon opposes your sign. This simply means you have to give a little.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Expect others to come to you with their problems at work today. They know you are sympathetic and kind. (And you are.) Just do whatever you can do. You can at least listen, which is what most people really need anyhow.

DAILY CROSSWORD



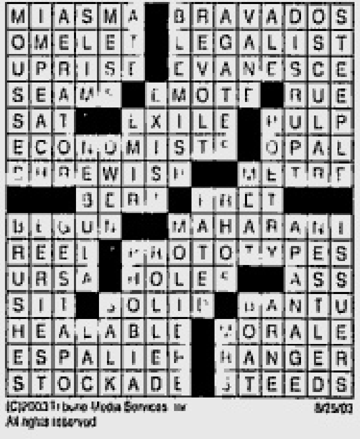
By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

8/25/03

ACROSS
1 Lively
5 Phone message
9 Standee's handgrip
14 Jai __
15 Curved molding
16 Ingenuous
17 Not number one on stage?
20 Aromatic compounds
21 Word in an octagon
22 Aardvark's snack
23 Prognosticator
25 Eyes, poetically
27 L.A. clock setting
30 Part of a process
32 Ordeals
36 Coup d'__
38 Ancient country in the Peloponnesus
40 Snowy dwelling
41 Not number one on base?
44 Old hag
45 Restrain
46 Sector
47 Pictures in pictures
49 __ Alto, CA
51 "__ Doubtfire"
52 Cotton-tipped cleaner
54 High-grade cotton
56 Pompous fool
59 Popular cookie
61 In abundance
65 Not number one in the ring?
68 Camera name
69 Euphemistic oath
70 Exile isle
71 Parts of pipes
72 Withered
73 Scandinavian rugs

DOWN
1 Unsolicited ms. enclosure
2 Also
3 Engrossed
4 Egad!
5 Stayed in?
6 Writer's rep.
7 Oahu garlands
8 Slowly, musically
9 Hat style
10 Tic-toe tie
11 Ms. Moreno
12 Severn feeder
13 Sassy
18 Mining products
19 "The Day the Earth Stood Still" robot
24 Artifact
26 Rho-tau separator
27 "GoodFellas" co-star
28 Severe
29 Tex-Mex order
31 Poster
33 Frighten
34 Recluse
35 Soft drinks
37 Shades
39 Discard
42 Complex systems
43 Bind
48 Delhi dress
50 __ Khayyam
53 Deflects
55 Take in pants, for example
56 Invites
57 Predicament
58 Marquis de __
60 Fairy-tale brute
62 Simply
63 McEntire sitcom
64 Time periods
66 Lamb's father
67 On a __ with

Saturday's Puzzle Solved



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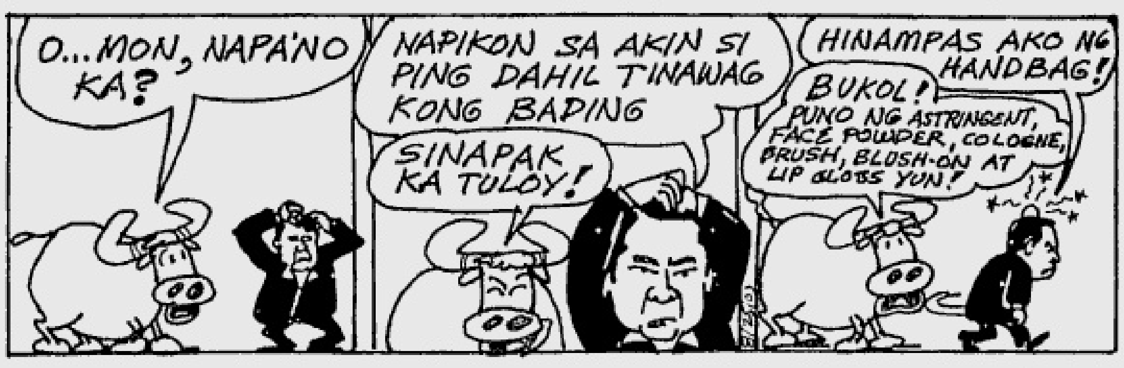
8/25/03

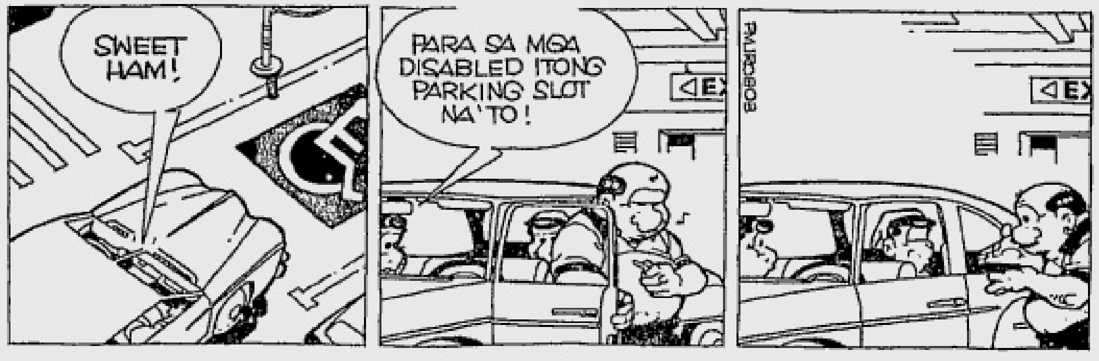
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


O...MON, NAPA'NO KA?
NAPIKON SA AKIN SI PING DAHIL TINAWAG KONG BADING
SINAPAK KA TULOY!
HINAMPAS AKO NG HANDBAG!
BUKOL! PUNO NG ASTRINGENT, FACE POWDER, COLOGNE, BRUSH, BLUSH-ON AT LIP GLOSS YUN!

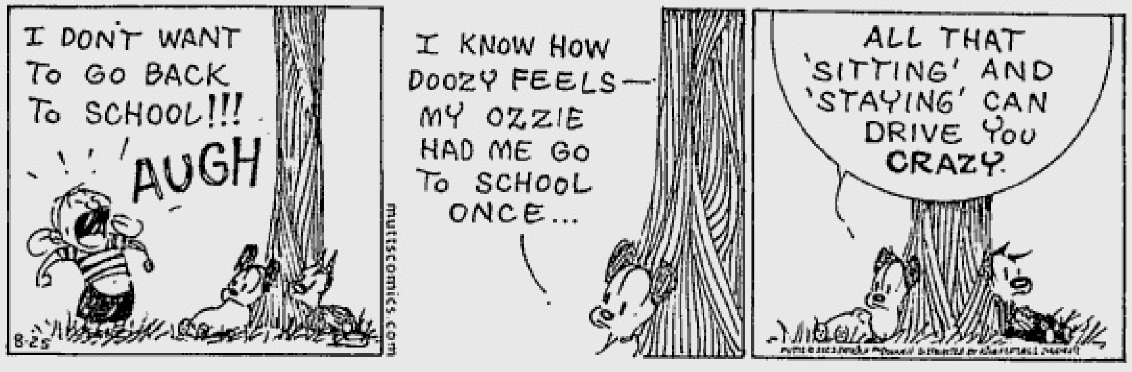
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SWEET HAM!
PARA SA MGA DISABLED ITONG PARKING SLOT NA'TO!
EX
PMJR0803

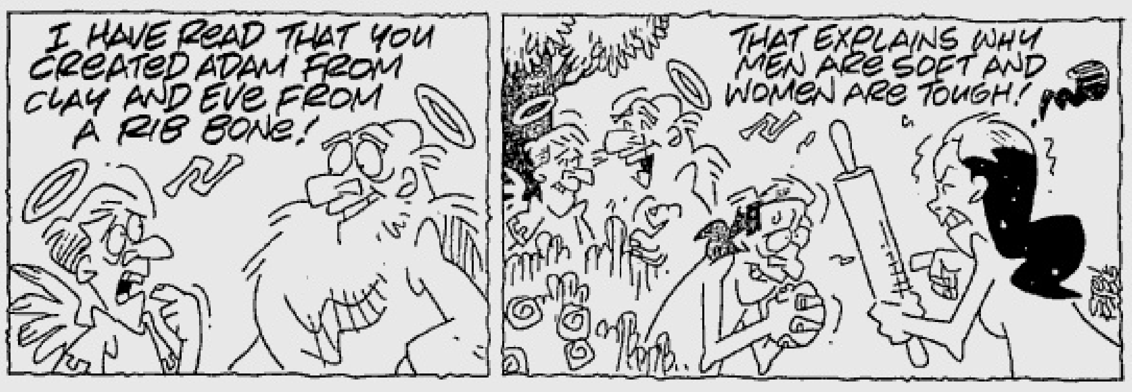
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL!!!
AUGH
I KNOW HOW DOOZY FEELS— MY OZZIE HAD ME GO TO SCHOOL ONCE...
ALL THAT 'SITTING' AND 'STAYING' CAN DRIVE YOU CRAZY.
8-25
muttscomics.com

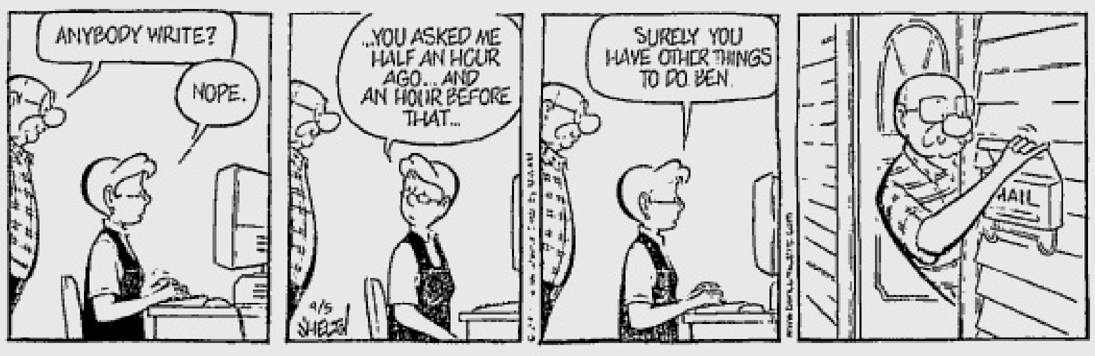
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I HAVE READ THAT YOU CREATED ADAM FROM CLAY AND EVE FROM A RIB BONE!
THAT EXPLAINS WHY MEN ARE SOFT AND WOMEN ARE TOUGH!

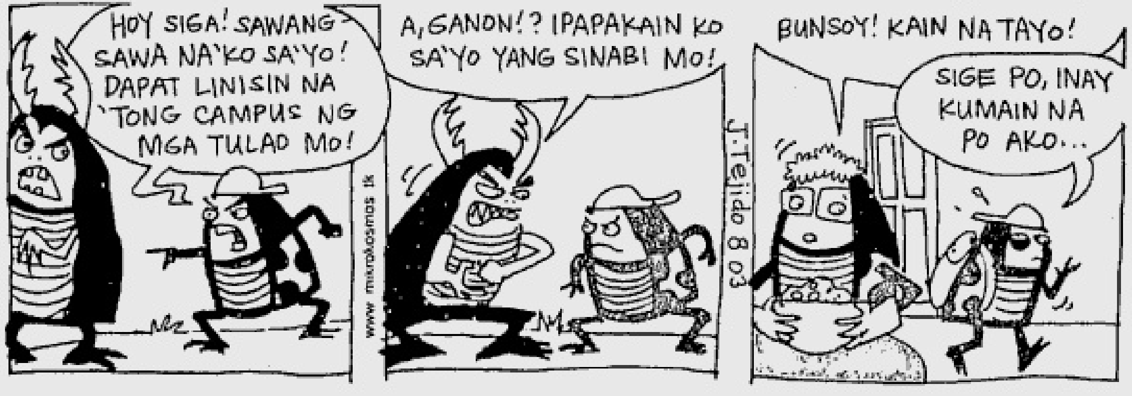
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


ANYBODY WRITE?
NOPE.
...YOU ASKED ME HALF AN HOUR AGO... AND AN HOUR BEFORE THAT...
SURELY YOU HAVE OTHER THINGS TO DO, BEN.
MAIL
4/5 SHELTON

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


HOY SIGA! SAWANG-SAWA NA'KO SA'YO! DAPAT LINISIN NA 'TONG CAMPUS NG MGA TULAD MO!
A, GANON!? IPAPAKAIN KO SA'YO YANG SINABI MO!
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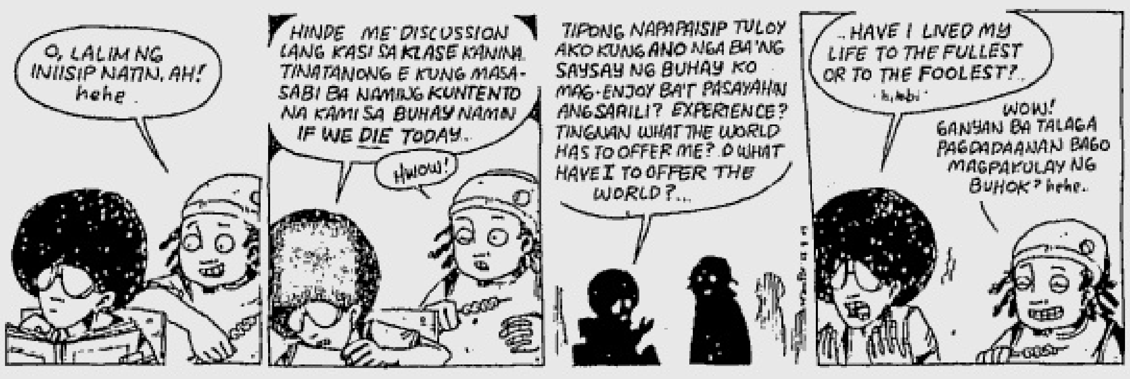
J. Tejido 8 03
BUNSOY! KAIN NA TAYO!
SIGE PO, INAY KUMAIN NA PO AKO...

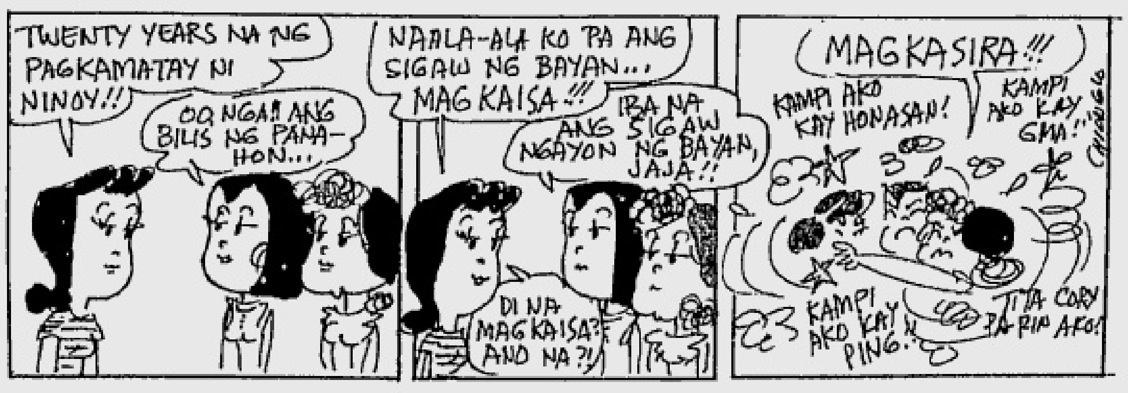
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


O, LALIM NG INIISIP NATIN, AH! hehe
HINDE ME' DISCUSSION LANG KASI SA KLASE KANINA. TINATANONG E KUNG MASASABI BA NAMING KUNTENTO NA KAMI SA BUHAY NAMIN IF WE DIE TODAY.
HWOW!
TIPONG NAPAPAISIP TULOY AKO KUNG ANO NGA BA'NG SAYSAY NG BUHAY KO MAG-ENJOY BA'T PASAYAHIN ANG SARILI? EXPERIENCE? TINGNAN WHAT THE WORLD HAS TO OFFER ME? O WHAT HAVE I TO OFFER THE WORLD?...
..HAVE I LIVED MY LIFE TO THE FULLEST OR TO THE FOOLEST?.. hihihi
WOW! GANYAN BA TALAGA PAGDADAANAN BAGO MAGPAKULAY NG BUHOK? hehe.

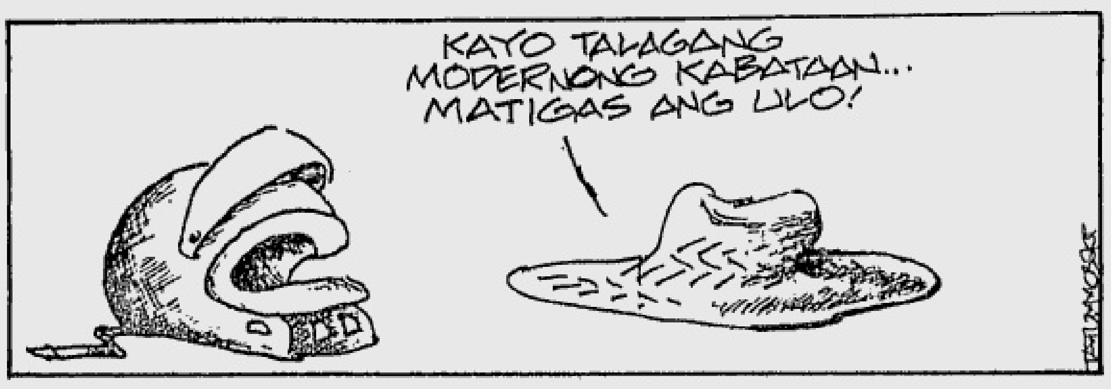
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


TWENTY YEARS NA NG PAGKAMATAY NI NINOY!!
OO NGA!! ANG BILIS NG PANAHON...
NAALA-ALA KO PA ANG SIGAW NG BAYAN... MAG KAISA!!!
IBA NA ANG SIGAW NGAYON NG BAYAN, JAJA!!
DI NA MAG KAISA?! ANO NA?!
MAGKASIRA!!!
KAMPI AKO KAY HONASAN!
KAMPI AKO KAY GMA!!
KAMPI AKO KAY PING!!
TITA CORY PA RIN AKO!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


KAYO TALAGANG MODERNONG KABATAAN... MATIGAS ANG ULO!

THE CAST, led by Noel Ascona, Rachel Gerodias and Lemuel de la Cruz, gives a sampling of key passages from the opera.

Takayama opera puts spotlight on Philippines-Japan relations

From page E1

faith, but also a glowing testimony to the strong cultural ties between Japan and the Philippines.

This is seen, in particular, in the fusion of the expertise between Edward Tuazon-Ishita, who wrote the libretto, and Fr. Manuel Maramba, OSB, who composed the music; and in general, in the collaboration between the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Conservatory of Music and the Tokyo Opera Association that spearheaded the mounting of the opera.

The opera focuses on the universality of Takayama's noble virtue, which is ardently admired not only in Japan and the Philippines but also worldwide. It is mounted to commemorate his 450th birth anniversary and the 100th year of the arrival of the Japanese in Mindanao.

The opera had its premiere in Tokyo last June and was brought throughout Japan, from Kanazawa in the north to Okinawa in the south and other key cities.

In the Philippines, the opera will be staged south to north, from Davao, on account of the centennial of Japanese presence in Mindanao, to Cebu in the Visayas, and then to Manila and Baguio City in Luzon.

In a press lunch held recently at the UST Conservatory of Music, Edward Ishita said the strong conviction of Lord Takayama was the primary reason he wrote the libretto. A non-Catholic, he said that Takayama's espousal of religious and personal freedom over imperial authoritarianism is a virtue that should strongly be emulated. The director of the Tokyo Opera Association, Mr. Ishita has gained prominence for writing librettos for operatic religious productions that were presented in Europe and attended by Pope John II.

Father Maramba, on the other hand, said that the collaborative effort started four years ago. On the lookout for a Filipino composer, Mr. Ishita was referred to the UST Conservatory of Music where he found the Benedictine monk-teacher. Perhaps it was divine providence that guided Mr. Ishita to UST because UST is a pontifical institution with ties to the Vatican; it sports the august title of "the Catholic University of the Philippines." In addition, Father Maramba is an acclaimed composer of religious operas, having written "Aba! Santo Niño" and "La Naval," among others.

Asked what kind of music he employed in the opera, Father Maramba, known for his atonal style, wittily said that he avoided being atonal and wrote music that "people can listen to, not too abstract or intellectual, and not too saccharine either."

He said he saw to it that the music strike a good balance between the mind and the heart. He said he was happy that "Edward felt his music."

ASIDE from the well-known Gerodias, coloratura and mezzo sopranos in the cast include Thea Perez, Katrina Saporsantos and Joanna Go.

Sampling

A good sampling of songs and choruses highlighted the press briefing.

Listening to the male chorus, "Barcarolle"; the trio with female chorus, "Colors and Perfumes of Flowers"; the mixed chorus, "Garaze's Agony," rendered alternately by soprano Rachelle Gerodias, baritone Noel Ascona (essaying Okun, the lead role) and tenor Lemuel de la Cruz; and the rousing chorus "Bienvenido (Welcome)"—one savored the understated elegance of Father Maramba's music.

The music was transparent, like a Japanese painting; and austere but full, like a haiku.

A serene atmosphere was etched in the undulating, conversational interweaving of melodic lines in the first two choruses that were effectively contrasted by the bouncy, rhythmic fanfare scored like a tarantelle in the first few bars of the pulsating "Bienvenido."

Remorse, defiance and acquiescence were ably projected in the arias of the last three solo singers.

Surely the opera will be made memorable with the catchy music Father Maramba had composed.

The cast is primarily made up of UST Conservatory of Music faculty members and students. Five persons in the cast were recipients of Japanese scholarships that enabled them to pursue graduate and postgraduate courses in voice at the Elizabeth University in Japan.

One of them is Prof. Eugene de los Santos, who holds a doctorate in vocal pedagogy from Elizabeth. Students and faculty from other schools join them, too, including veteran opera singer, baritone Gamaliel Viray, a faculty member of School of Music of Sta. Isabel College, who essays the role of Hideyoshi, and three others from the UP College of Music and St. Scholastica's College.

Many of the cast have had a track record for operatic and other musical performances. They are: Nenen Espina, Ronan Ferrer, Jose Randy Gilongo, Ma. Katrina Saporsantos, Joanna Go, Thea Perez, Jun Francis Jaranilla, Joliloryn Quitain, Wilson Cariaga, Maricialyn Lopez, Paulo Martin Trinidad and Von Ryan Yu.

Prof. Hermenegildo Ranera is the musical director and the conductor of the UST Symphony Orchestra for the Philippine performances.

Ms Bibiana Tuazon Ishita, the Filipina mother of Edward Ishita, capped the press briefing by saying that her son's musicality came from the collective genius of the Filipino people who are noted for their innate musicality. (Ishita said his parents are non-musicians even if they are ardent music lovers.)

Who is Takayama?

Prof. Ernie de Pedro, Ph.D., a faculty member of the UST Graduate School, is an impeccable authority on Takayama.

De Pedro resigned as director-general of the Film Archives of the Philippines in 1989 to devote himself full-time to research on Lord Takayama.

He eventually prepared the "Positio" (position paper) for the Vatican study on Takayama's life and times in connection with the Japanese lord's beatification cause.

De Pedro gave significant information on Lord Takayama.

When the Jesuits started their missionary activities in Japan, the Takayama family was among the early converts. Takayama was baptized a Catholic at the age of 11 in 1563. He became a *daimyo* or governor in Takatsuki, a castle town strategically located between Osaka and Kyoto, then the capital of Japan. He gained fame as a general, and at one time served as the commanding general of Shogun Hideyoshi's bodyguard battalion.

Takayama became famous as a builder of castles, as a "waka" or poet, a teamaster, and builder of churches, oratories and a seminary, apart from being an effective preacher.

When Takayama refused to renounce his Catholic faith in defiance of a shogunal edict interdicting Christianity, he was banished to Manila and other noblemen he had converted. He went to Manila with the desire to live a full Christian life. They were welcomed by the Spanish governor general.

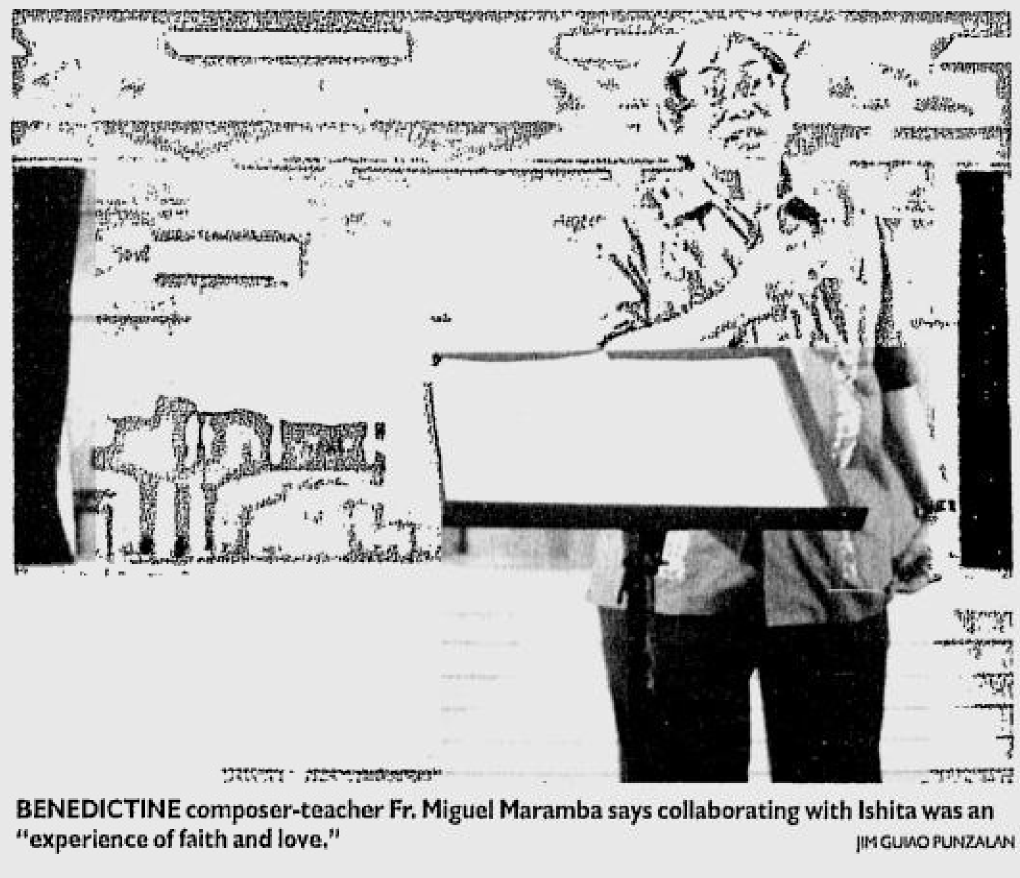
In 1977, the Manila City government, with support from Tatsuki City, established the Philippines-Japan Friendship Park at Plaza Dilao, site of the 17th century Japanese settlement. The statue of Lord Takayama graced the center of the park.

The public was quite hostile to the project, complaining that some 32 years back, the Japanese Army had maimed more than one million Filipinos and ravaged the country.

Eventually peace and understanding prevailed, said De Pedro, making Takayama a fitting symbol of peace and friendship between the Japanese and the Filipino people.

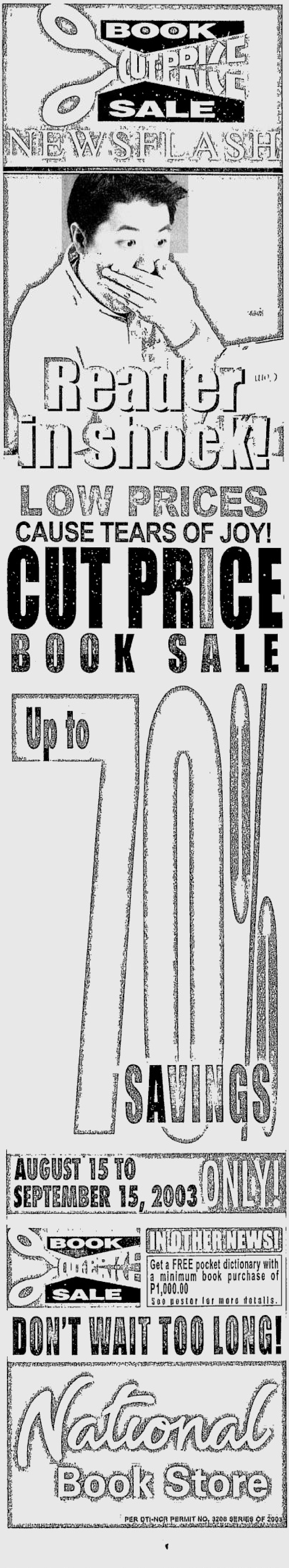
Therefore, the opera is envisioned as a celebration of the long-standing Philippine-Japan cultural relations.

The opera, "The Venerable Lord Takayama Okun," will go onstage at the Philamlife Auditorium on Aug. 29-31 at 7:30 p.m., with a matinee on the 31st at 3 p.m. For tickets, call the UST Conservatory, 7314022 or 7313101 local 8246.



BENEDICTINE composer-teacher Fr. Miguel Maramba says collaborating with Ishita was an "experience of faith and love."

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN



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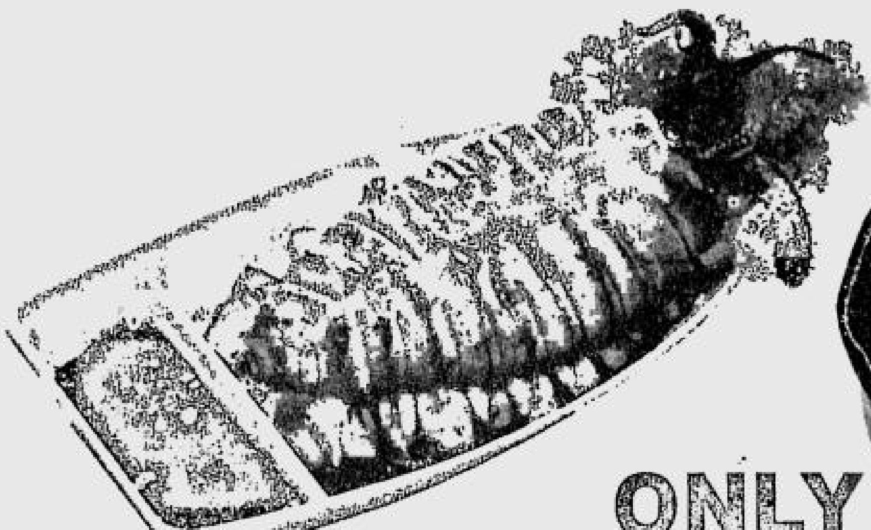

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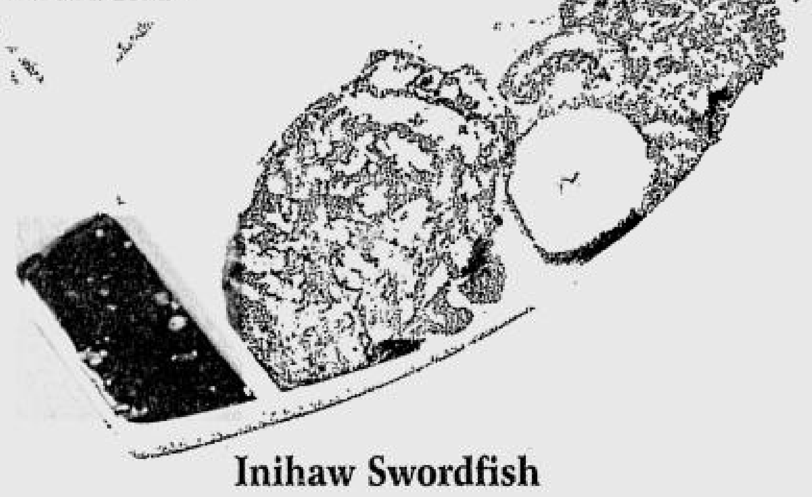

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Ramon Magsaysay Awards lecture series set

THE 2003 Ramon Magsaysay Award Lecture Series will run on Aug. 28 to Sept. 4 at the Ramon Magsaysay Center on Roxas Blvd, Manila. The schedule:

James Michael Lyngdoh (government service) will lecture on "Building Faith in the Electoral Process" on Aug. 28 at 2 p.m.

Shantha Sinha (community leadership) will lecture on "Promoting the Child's Right to Real Childhood" on Aug. 29 at 1:30 p.m.

Aniceto Guterres Lopes (emergent leadership) will lecture on "After a Traumatic Conflict: Confronting the Truth, Fostering Reconciliation" on Sept. 1 at 9 a.m.

Seiei Toyama (peace and international understanding) will lecture on "Greening the Desert with the Spirit of Volunteerism" on Sept. 1 at 2 p.m.

Sheila Coronel (journalism, literature and creative communication arts) will lecture on "Enriching Democratic Discourse: Investigative Journalism for an Informed Citizenry" on Sept. 2 at 2 p.m.

Tetsu Nakamura (peace and international understanding) will lecture on "Transcending Ethnicity, Religion and Politics Toward Peace" on Sept. 4 at 9 p.m.

Call 5242309.

SHEILA Coronel

TETSU Nakamura

SHANTHA Sinha

SEIEI Toyama

JAMES Michael Lyngdoh

3rd batch of 'Dalitext' poetry winners named

ROGER H. Endaya and Ferdinand Bajado are the Text Makata ng Linggo on the third week of the Dalitext poetry writing contest.

Last week's Text Makata ng Linggo, Frank Rivera, won two consolation prizes.

The contest on its third week received more than 3,000 entries, some coming from as far as Bahrain, Hongkong and Saudi Arabia.

Prolific poet Lamberto E. Antonio, one of the judges, noted that economic struggle and fervent hope for progress were the themes highlighted in the entries.

Malayo man ako ngayon
kaulayaw bawat alon.
Ako'y naglalagas na dahon
sa ibang bayan umahon.
-Roger H. Endaya

Di pa hinog sa panahon
tinutuka na ng ibon
Bungang natakpan ng dahon;
sinusungkit na ng gutom
-Ferdinand Bajado

Limampung taon si Darna.
Hanggang ngayo'y bidang-bida.
Pero maliligtas pa ba
ang bayan nya ng pantasya?
-Frank Rivera

Anak sumisiyap-siyap,
naghahanap ng paglingap.
Inang lumilipad-lipad,
nalula na sa pangarap.
-Frank Rivera

Other consolation winners are Patrick Gapas, Louie L. Abadier, Joven Lotayo, Ricardo Palaypay, Michael Francis Andrada and Rowan Velonta.

The *dalit* is a short poem in Filipino of four rhyming lines, with each line consisting of eight syllables, expressing a complete thought.

Entries must express patriotism. They must be texted to 0920-8367541 or 0918-5311669. Entries must have the name of the authors and sent not later than 5 p.m., Friday.

Dalitext is sponsored by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Filipinas Institute of Translation, Inc., Unyon ng mga Manunulat sa Pilipinas and the UP Institute of Creative Writing. Call 9221830.

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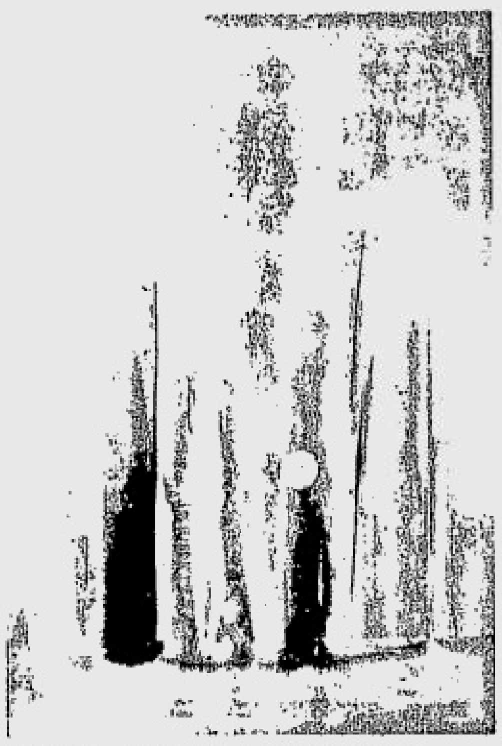
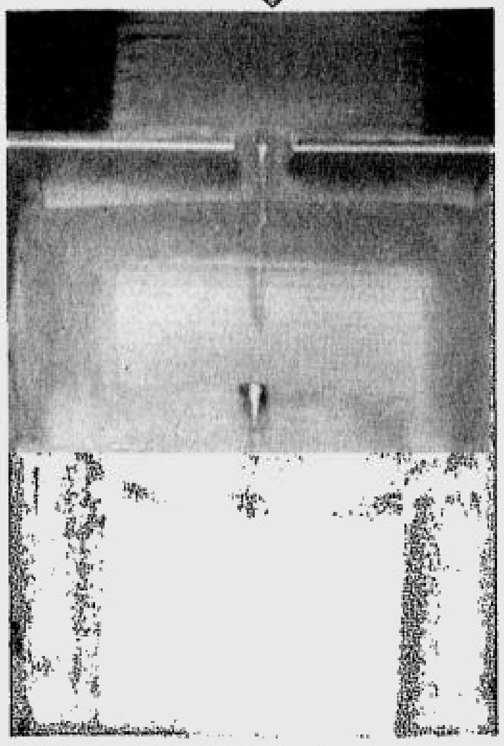


"INEVITABLE Hour," by Caloy Gabuco



"COSMIC Sunrise," by Fred Ramirez

Liquid masters

'Kulay sa Tubig,' the annual competition in watercolor, turns 20

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THE IMAGE on the invitation, culled from the 20th Century Fox Pictures studio icon, could not have been more apt. It was the organizers' special way of marking two decades of "Kulay sa Tubig," the annual competition in watercolor, the personal advocacy of the Salas couple, Ernie and Araceli, owners of Genesis Gallery.

"Kulay sa Tubig" is acknowledged as the one contest artists worthy of their medium eagerly look forward to, if only to prove their mastery of watercolor.

This year's jury—art critics Eric Torres and Alice Guillermo, University of the Philippines academic Patrick Flores, artist Fred Liongoren, art collector Remigio David, gallery owner Robert Lane, and this writer—faced a tough task as they pondered the versatility of the now popular medium.

The participants painted an emotional range as broad as their imagination could take them. They tapped the infinite ways of aquarelle, dipping into its vast creative reservoir, and unlocking the mysterious ways of the medium.

Well-honed techniques

The diverse images on the wall (a mounting coup in itself, conceived and executed by Ms Salas herself) yielded an equal variety of subjects and themes, well-honed techniques, showcasing a mastery of the medium.

There were still lifes and landscapes, both in the realistic and abstract modes, an equal share of fig-

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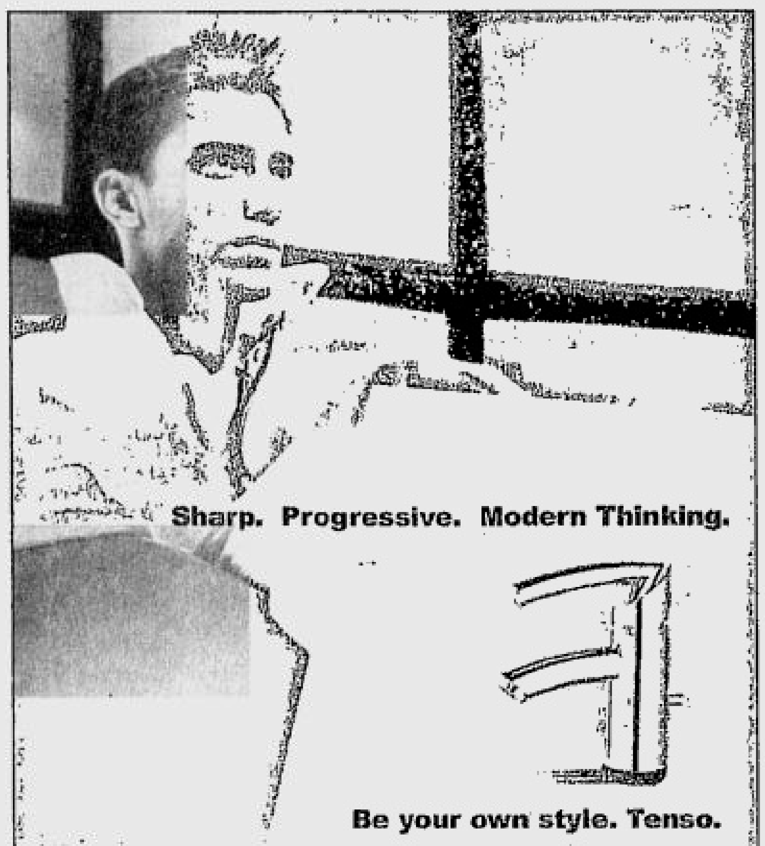

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Moon over Aotearoa

A Pinoy artist comes into his own in a New Zealand show of migrant artists

Text by Divina C. Paredes
Contributor
Photos by Rod Alcoriza

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Jose "Pinggot" Vinluan Zulueta says his works as photojournalist and visual artist have always been social commentaries. The 42-year-old artist has always opted to depict "the good and bad in Philippine society, the challenges and shortcomings of Filipinos, as a nation and as individuals."

These themes were evident in his critically-acclaimed exhibits in the Philippines, the most recent of which was "Asinta" (Bulls Eye, September 2002), which featured digitally processed drawings and photographs of political and socio-economic events in the past two decades.

These days, however, those themes have been taking a back seat as Zulueta's art explores more personal feelings on a recent major change in his life.

In January this year, Zulueta and his wife Vanessa and daughter Paula, 16, migrated to Aotearoa, "Land of the Long White Cloud" New Zealand.

While the move, Zulueta admits, jolted him, it had a hint of irony. For the first time in nearly two decades, he had all the time in the world to paint; time, which was a luxury when he was working six days a week, sometimes more, as a news photographer.

His house in Auckland's North Shore is now replete with his works that he planned to exhibit in Manila. But while surfing the Internet for jobs, Zulueta stumbled upon the Big Idea (thebigidea.co.nz), the online community of New Zealand artists, and learned about a forthcoming exhibit of migrant artists.

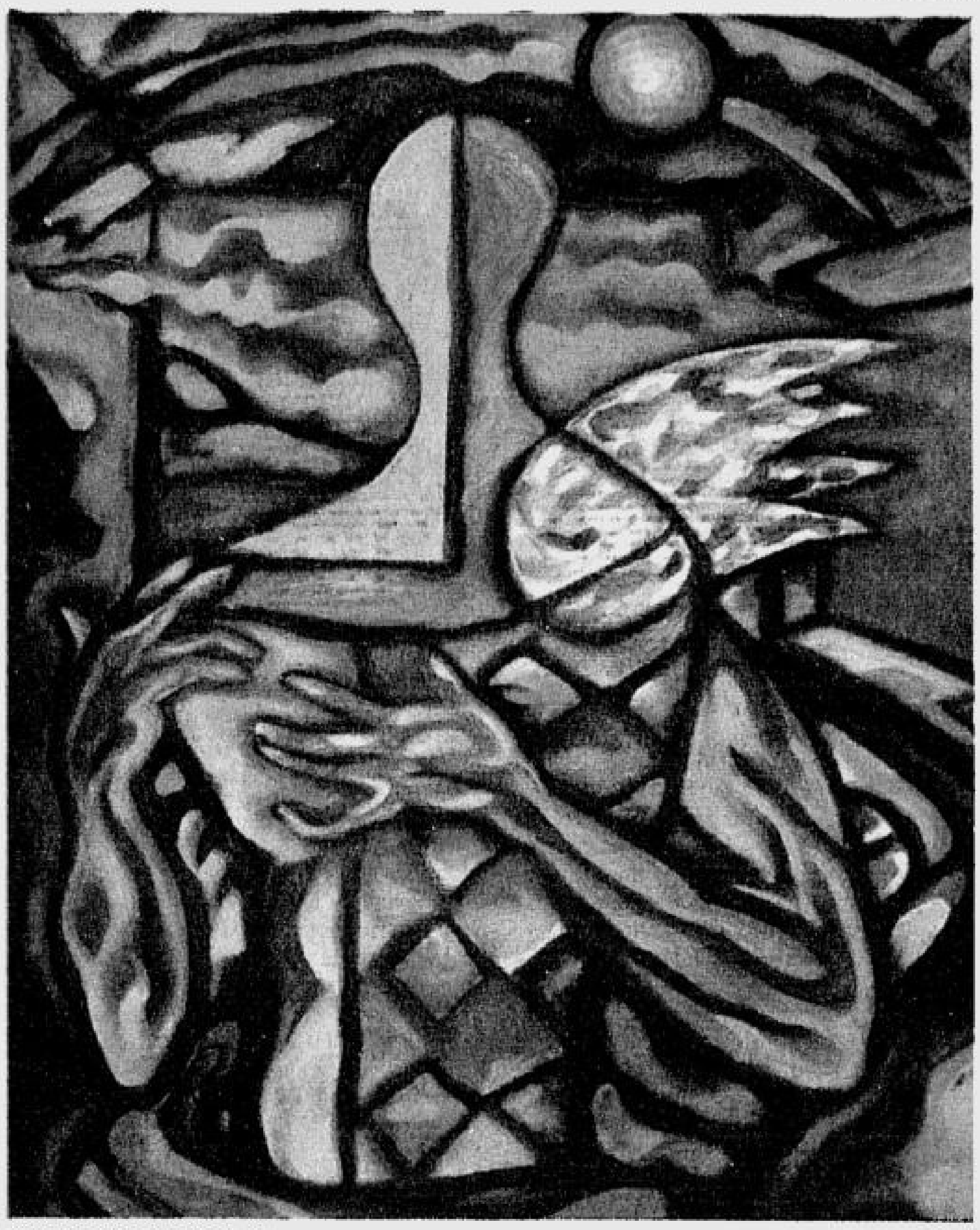
Zulueta contacted the organizers, Arts Access Aotearoa and AB Arts Partnership, and is now one of the artists of the ongoing group exhibit "On Arrival."

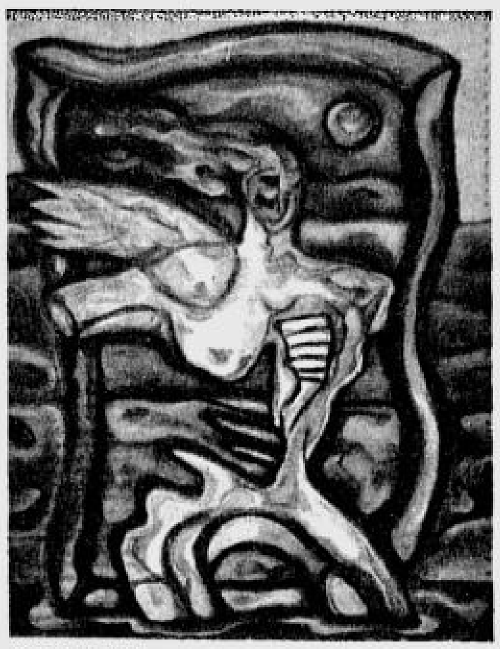
The exhibit at the Bashford Gallery, in the trendy Auckland section of Ponsonby, brings Zulueta together with artists from Argentina, Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Colombia, England, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Kenya, Kosovo, Malaysia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Somalia, Spain, Taiwan, Uganda, USA and Uruguay.

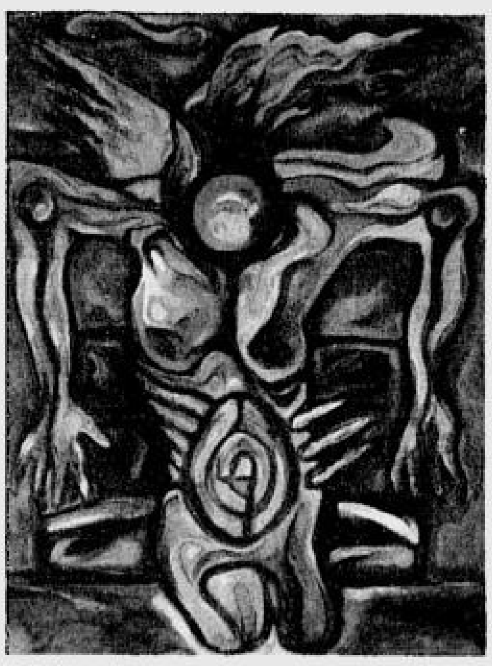
Zulueta opted to create three new works for the exhibit. The oil paintings, he declares, "represent mixed feelings of uncertainty and fear—emotions that a migrant experiences on arrival in his or her adopted land." The titles say it all—"Introspection," "Journey" and "Unknown."

While the colors may appear attractive and vivid, a closer look reveals sadness and fear. Those who are familiar with his earlier works would also note the colors are "darker," a fact Zulueta acknowledges.

The choice of surreal figures in his works is deliberate. "The figures do not have detailed faces and have protruding skeletal outlines indicative of the migrants' difficulties and challenges. The paintings depict their search for meaning and identity and what the uncertain future holds for them."


"INTROSPECTION," oil on canvas


"JOURNEY"


"UNKNOWN"

AT BACHFORD Gallery in Auckland, Oxfam program director Harriet Sewell, artist Pinggot Zulueta, Vanessa Zulueta and the author

The figure in "Introspection" is actually faceless. In "Journey," the facial features are hazy. The principal figure is entering a door, but seemingly floating on the air, as if in limbo. This, he says, was how he felt the first few weeks and months in New Zealand.

The third painting, aptly titled "Unknown," shows his uncertainty on what his future holds in his adopted homeland.

A common image—the moon, always in flaming red—links the three canvases. In "Introspection" and "Journey," the moon is peering from behind the human figure. In the last canvas, the moon is less discernible, merging with the head of the human figure.

Zulueta explains the moon reflects constancy and a link to his past life. It is the same moon, after all, that could be seen in the land he left and the country he now calls home.

While Zulueta has devoted more time to photojournalism in the last decade or so (he won the first and third prizes in the 1997 Willie Vicoy Photojournalism Awards in the Nature and Environment Category, among other awards), his academic background is in painting.

He graduated in 1982 with a Fine Arts degree, major in Painting, at the University of Sto. Tomas and took up post-graduate courses at the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts.

In 1982, while working as a graphic artist and illustrator in a government agency, he enrolled in a workshop of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The workshop lasted two months, but for Zulueta, it was "an eye-opener and paved the way for my sustained interest and studies in the visual arts."

He knew, however, he had to take on a regular job to sustain his craft, and, since 1986, has been working in major Philippine newspapers, first as an editorial artist, then as news photographer.

But the fast pace of newspaper work meant Zulueta did not have ample time to paint. He consoled himself by the fact that he had a daily "exhibit" of his works—on the front pages of the newspapers.

As he puts it, the nuances of injecting art into photojournalism and painting are different. As a photographer, he says, he sees the subjects outright, and can compose the picture. In painting, he starts on a blank canvas.

He credits, however, his vast experiences in news coverage—he has covered coup attempts, presidential visits, crime scenes and the less gritty lifestyle shoots—for providing him endless subjects for his artworks.

His current exhibit—a feat, considering he has only been in New Zealand for only seven months—is simply a first step in what he hopes to be a full-time career in visual arts in his adopted country.

Brett Hopkins, of AB Arts Partnership and curator of the exhibit says Zulueta's paintings are "unique" compared to the other artworks in "On Arrival."

"They have real strength in terms of both color and composition. As expressionist works, they deftly convey an intensity of experience that is intriguing, although a little disturbing. I particularly admire his ability to translate his recent experiences with such immediacy."

Even then, Hopkins finds a common thread in Zulueta's works with those of the other artists.

"The artists are attempting to deliver their impressions of dealing with life in a new world order. Not all the artworks in this exhibition attempt this feat, but among those which deal with migration or relocation, there is a sense of dislocation and the trials of dealing with the unknown. In contrast to placing experience within past culture or the culture from one's past, Zulueta's work is about dealing with the present and its possible future."

It is worth watching, then, how the choices of themes and colors of this exemplary artist will change as he adjusts in his new home.

The author is a staff writer of an IT management magazine in Auckland, and a columnist of Diario Filipino, the newspaper of the Philippine community in New Zealand.

Liquid masters

From page F1

urative pieces and well-delineated portraitures, works that proved beyond doubt that aquarelle has finally evolved as a medium of respect and honor.

The top five winners were Caloy Gabuco, Alfred Galura, Noli Principe Manalang, Victor Ng and Aner Sebastian. Runners-up were Nunelucio Alvarado, Pablo Baens Santos, Demetrio de la Cruz, Fred Ramirez and Jose Vistan.

Gabuco, perhaps better known for his figurative work, has been doubling as an abstractionist, as his past two winning entries attest.

Gabuco's winning piece, "The Inevitable Hour," is spare, subdued, supremely seductive in its rendering of a landscape virtually reduced to its elemental presence. With a pale-pink orb rising amid an evanescent backdrop, the work resonates with poetic transparency.

Galura's two entries, a perspective of a Batanes landscape and a boy cuddling his rooster, clinched the award for him. The former offers a view of the mountainous terrain jutting out into the horizon, with the sea on the foreground, and the sky looming in the distance.

The latter shows a smiling boy closely cradling his pet. It captures effervescent innocence.

Dexterous composers

The two pieces by Manalang, a previous winner like Gabuco, showcases his dexterity at composition. The signs and symbols in "Celestial Warrior," Manalang's winning piece, conjures the joys and terrors of our age. The architect-turned-artist has an insightful eye as he has a skillful brush.

Ng's "A Busy Day" shows a masterly technique with watercolor. With its fine rendering of a burgeoning industrial port, the hub of an industrialized setting, the piece is a tribute to the artist's skillful use of the versatility of the medium.

Sebastian's "Loggers' Delight" is a triumph of the watercolorist's perspicacity, finely grounded as it is on transparency and opacity. With its fragmented, cut-up rendering of lumber pieces, complete with numbers to denote the commodity, the work is a grim reminder of the imminent destruction of our forest resources.

As for the runners-up, De la Cruz's stills were fine examples of the art of photorealism, the subject of fruits, leaves and dewdrops captured in all their awesome glory.

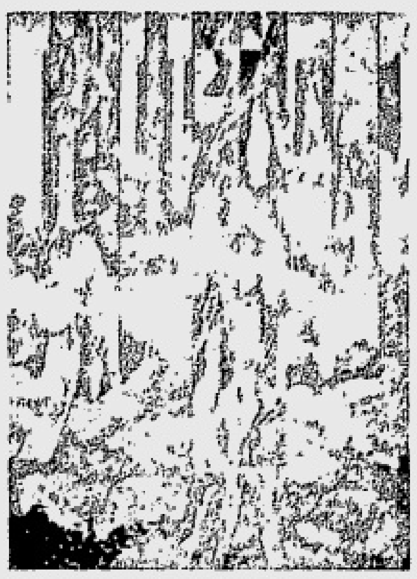
Alvarado's recurring subject of the *sakada* makes its presence, though admittedly the subject is more fully explored in the artist's bigger canvases.

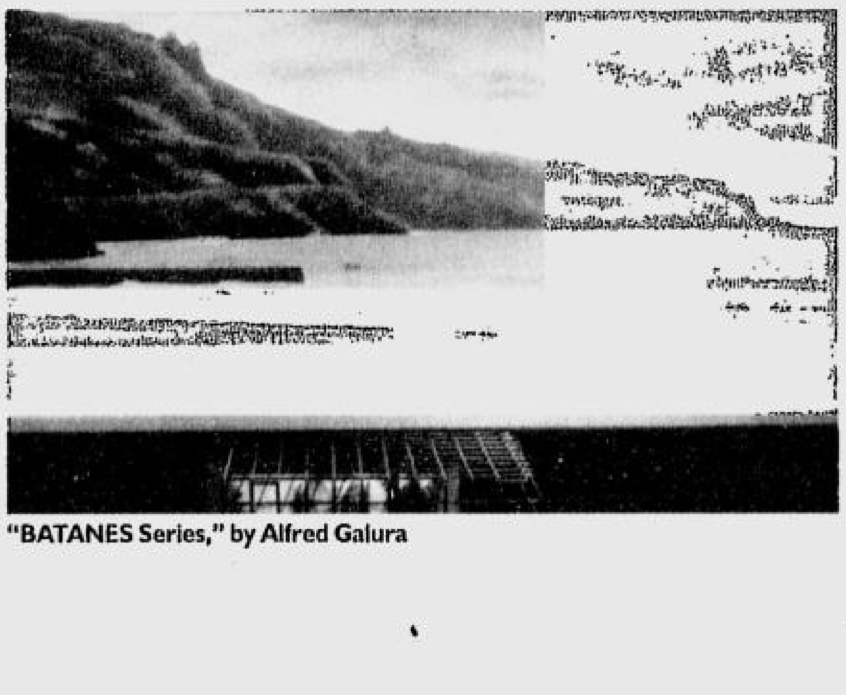
Baens-Santos, who vied for the last remaining slot with Buds Convocar, who did an abstract work, had the only sociorealist piece in the show, an Olmedoesque image of street denizens like those in Metro Manila.

Ramirez' two works in figure and abstract modes reveal an ambidexterity rare among artists today. But it was his abstract "Cosmic Sunrise" that put him in the runner-up circle.

Vistan, a perennial winner in the contest, captured the quintessential wonders of watercolor.

For comments, e-mail author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com


"LOGGER'S Delight," by Aner Sebastian


"BATANES Series," by Alfred Galura

Quinto's women at Joaquin

INSPIRED by Mexican artist Diego Rivera and Filipino contemporary artist Hermes Alegre, Pakil-raised Roniño Quinto has put together 24 new major works, "The Fruit and Flower Harvest," which opens on Aug. 28, 7 p.m., at Galerie Joaquin.

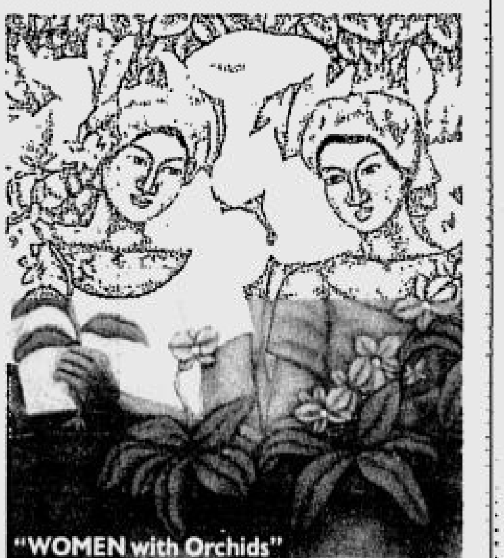
For this show, Quinto unveils four works of 36" x 55" titled "The Flower Harvest," "At the Flower Garden," "Full Moon Dance" and "The Vegetable Harvest."

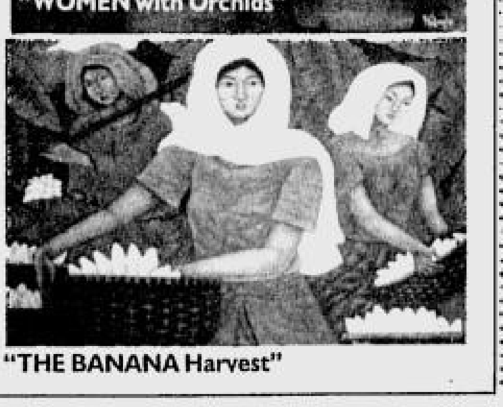
He has also prepared eight works of 30" x 40" which include "The Lanzones Harvest," "At the Flower Market," "Two Women Picking Flowers," "The Fruit Harvest," "Women in the Garden," "The Banana Harvest," "Women among Calla Lilies" and "Two Women at the Cornfield." He will also be showing 12 works of 30" x 24".

Quinto is unique for his use of very warm and strong colors to bring across his personal message of optimism and pride in one's daily tasks. His women are at once cheerful and radiant, painted in happy combinations of umber, siennas and ochres.

Quinto was born in Infanta, Quezon. As a young boy, he moved to Pakil, Laguna, where he was exposed to the works of Danny Dalena and Fred Baldemor.

Galerie Joaquin is located at 2/F, 371 P. Guevarra St. corner Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan. Call 7239418/9253.


"WOMEN with Orchids"


"THE BANANA Harvest"

Sungdu-an at Pasig Museum

THE NATIONAL Commission for Culture and the Arts-Committee on Visual Arts is holding "Sungdu-an3/NCR3: Making the Local" until Sept. 28 at Pasig City Museum, located along Plaza Rizal across Pasig City Hall.

The art show, curated by Imelda Cajipe-Endaya, presents the works of Datu Arellano, Don Salubayba and Marc Cosico from Anino Shadowplay; the Daambakal Sculptors Collective; mixed-media and performance artist Mideo Cruz; conceptual artist Lyra Abueg Garcellano; digital artist Fatima Lasay; and textile sculptor Mac Valdezco.

On Sept. 13, there will be the Artists' Dialogue with Garcellano, Cruz and Valdezco.

"Sungdu-an3/ NCR3" is organized by the NCCA-CVA in cooperation with the Pasig City Government, Pasig City Museum, and the Kalipunan ng Sining at Kultura ng Pasig.

The Pasig City Museum (tel. 6410211) is located at Plaza Rizal across Pasig City Hall, and is open daily (except Monday), 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A SCENE from "Magno Rubio"

Art in a time of coup d'etat

By Sylvia L. Mayuga
Contributor

A STORM was building, the last tickets were gone but on a phone line crackling with static came a sudden invitation from Loida Nicolas-Lewis to a matinee of "The Romance of Magno Rubio." A chance to spend the last two hours to Malacañang's 5 p.m. deadline for putschist surrender with a vintage college friend, not on coup-watching but in the last Manila performance of a new theater classic by young U.S.-based Fil-Am artists, was clearly the moment's gift.

Once the publisher of the anti-Marcos Ningas Cogon newsmagazine in the U.S., now a foreign investor in her native land and chair of the 500-strong National Assembly of Filipino Associations in America, this activist-after-my-heart stayed up the night before with the coup, writing another protest statement in our lifetime of protest statements.

Now calmed by Magno Rubio's exquisite song to the Filipino OFW, she was mourning the "lack of a sense of nationhood" in coup and political con artists alike, when my eye wandered to a scene of deceptive Sunday peace below her Rockwell high-rise.

Beside a Pasig River under its yearly cleansing-by-storm were the rust, faded reds and browns of corrugated roofs collaged with habitats patched together by squatter ingenuity—a living installation that looked part of Loida's growing collection of Pinoy art. Meawhile, a stone's throw away in Oakwood, a diseased political culture locked in mortal combat with fresh rebel passion was unfolding its companion performance. Art, love and pain, in storms inner and outer, had brewed a new moment for seeing.

Never was it clearer: corruption in a nation born of both the blood of martyrs and our people's clear visionary strain continues to obstruct its life force. The question remained a subtext of our exchange, but Loida and I asked it of each other without words: how do we live with the reality that, for all the courage and beauty strewn all over our history, theft, arrogance and hypocrisy remain endemic to our government, driving a briefly inspired citizenry back to cynicism, indifference, and rebellion against the tight clawhold of the status quo?

Atavistic trap

Ah, but that was precisely Magno Rubio's point. So long and deep has our agony been, yet with so fine and grace-filled its life force leaping onto the global stage, defying the American Eagle's atavistic new trap called "globalization." With Magno's gallant bow, this force was with us now in Loida's cocoon, sufficient unto itself.

Yet it remained riven by an abyss—between what the Filipino already is and the leaden politics of patronage weighing down his soul and confining even his mortal span. Edsa '86, the souffle whose rising took the global breath away, had become a youthful memory, its quick collapse under centuried greed and power lust haunting us to this day.

A numinous July 27 weekend was reduced to a whisper under a media barrage on government's version of the coup attempt in the days following, but a narrative of resistance resurfaced at the hearings of the Feliciano Commission, Congress and Senate. Charges and counter-charges of corruption, in a military protected by Malacañang for its own survival, recalled the Aquino assassination. The Agrava Commission's half-baked findings and government's inability to impose moral judgment was back on the TV screen in new guises 20 years later.

We did not have the will to name and punish the mastermind then; now our chances of doing justice to all, as we once swore, had diminished even further with old mental reflexes and the primal instinct for political survival.

Gordian knot

The longing grows keener by the day—for a sword to finally cut the historical Gordian Knot asphyxiating a republic turned global by generations of Magno Rubios wandering the world, crowded out of their native land by obscurantism and the organized selfishness of its elite.

Mastering soul, expressing ever-finer humanity, Filipino artists know these constrictions well. But will their far more powerful reality ever manage to peel off layers of falsehood and ignorance still obstructing a people's healing with their own magnificent gifts?

Small answers to large questions glimmered as the earnest Trillanes and the passionate Gambala stubbornly protected their knowledge of theft and abuse of power in the Philippine military years after martial law. The smallness was deceptive, pebbles of individual shock sending concentric ripples widening to farther edges of awareness in a communal pond.

Its first insight: our young president, who rose to power on just such indignation, still labors under a misperception of art as separate from governance—a fine thing but short of relevance to the peso-dollar exchange rate, a "global war on terrorism," and yes, this new coup attempt. Leader of a nation of artists and seers, she missed the chance to join a full-house audience locked in fascination by another tale of hope and resilience in Magno Rubio—a window into the soul of our country's largest dollar earner.

Nor did she have a moment to clap with a new generation of Filipino children, future rebels all, at Darna's new flight from the roots of pyroclastic folk imagination. How easy it is to miss historical turnings when one does not recognize the true bread of angels!

Filipino art has long invited governance to a finer sensibility that knows better than to wield a legalistic ten-foot pole, a short memory of our protest history, and insensitive insistence that young rebels groping their way to the heart of the matter in Pilipino, perforce switch to English.

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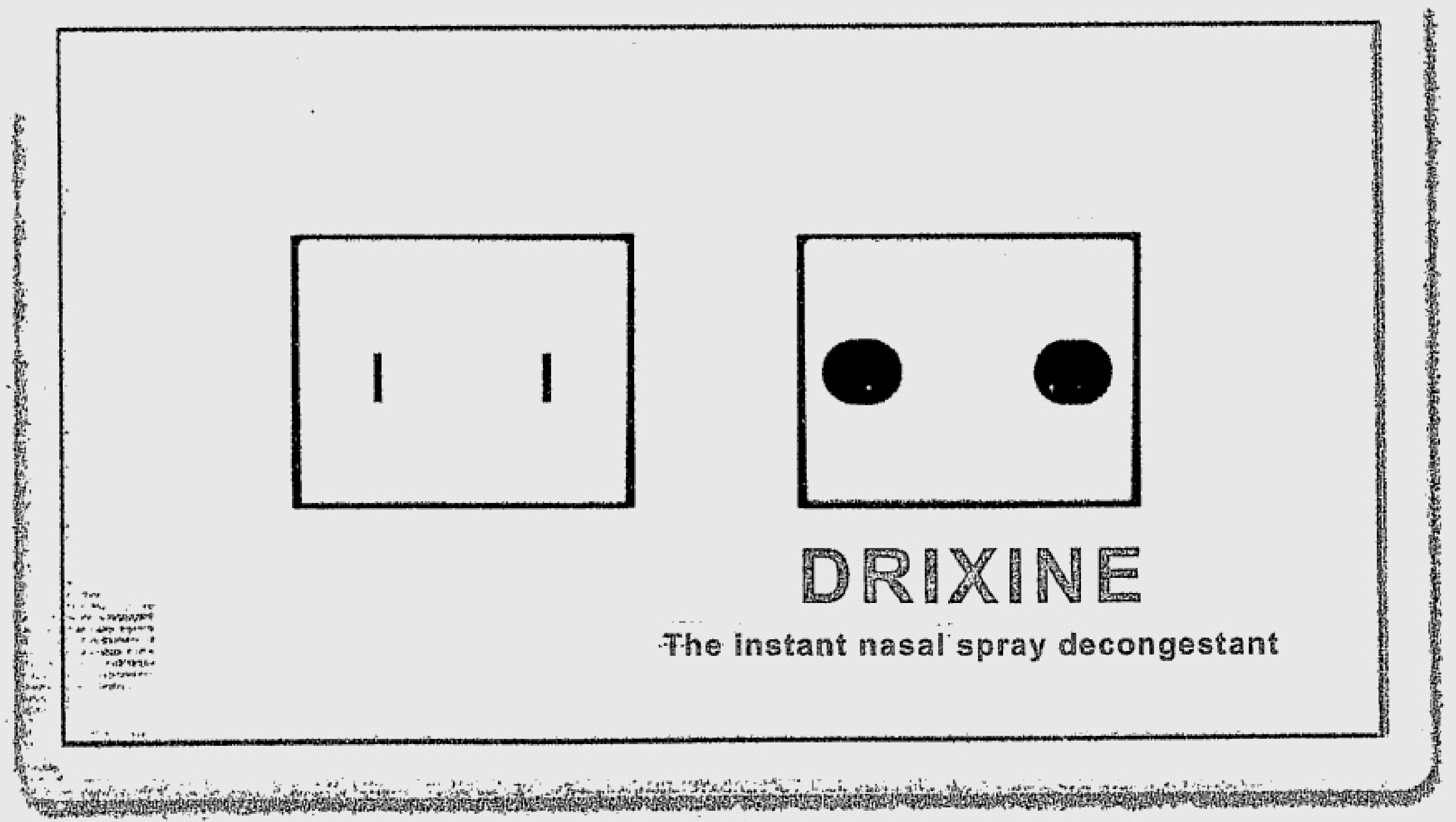
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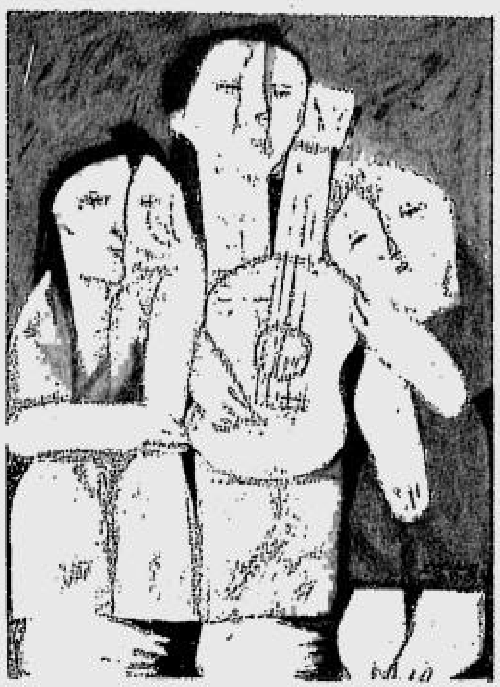
Malang's gouaches at West, Tañedo's personals at Kulay Diwa

VISUAL ARTS

MALANG shows his distinct strokes and some experiments when he displays his "Gouache Drawings" at the West Gallery (Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati) on Aug. 28-Sept. 9. The artist had been experimenting in gouache since his newspaper work in the 1950s. The drawings on show display Malang's familiar women figures as well as abstract renditions. He says he is fond of the medium because he can play around with colors just like a child. Call 7527028 to 29.

CJ TAÑEDO presents his first solo show, "Trudging Through the Ashes," at Kulay Diwa Art Galleries until Sept. 10. Mining his personal experiences, Tañedo, who won the Jurors' Choice in the Philippine Nokia Award and Merit Award for Outstanding Artistic Expression at the Nokia Art Award in Seoul, Korea, presents works in oil, acrylic and mixed media. He also employs image transfers from newspapers, common powdered prints and his own digital photographs. Kulay Diwa is located at 25 Lopez Ave., Lopez Village, Sucat, Parañaque.


"YELLOW Guitar" by Malang at West Gallery

EMERGENT artists will exhibit their new works in New York City starting today at the Philippine Center Gallery, located at 556 Fifth Ave., New York City. Featured artists are Addie Cukingnan, Sandra Fabie-Gfeller, Azor, Pazcoguin, Doltz Pilar and Wally Sy. The show attempts to show that art can overcome barriers, bridge boundaries and cross cultures.

ROBERTO M.A. Robles presents his "Beyond Filipino" series of small-scale paper sculptures. The artist's images, derived from Korean ideographs, recur in these sculptures, geometric forms rendered in bold brushstrokes and which at times look like hinges, knobs or cardboard toys. The exhibit runs until Sept. 26. Call 8957585 or 7441.

EPSON Philippines Corp. mounts "Ala-Alcala," the 12th annual exhibit in commemoration of Larry Alcala's Slice of Life, until Sept. 20 at the Corredor Hall of UP Diliman's College of Fine Arts.

FINALE Art Gallery showcases Mariano Ching's "Choke," which features 30 images on woodblock print. The show is on Aug. 26-Sept. 7 at Sunvar Plaza, Pasay Road, Makati and The Artwalk, 4/L, Megamall A, Mandaluyong City.

HERZON de la Rosa will exhibit his latest works on Aug. 30-Sept. 10 at Galerie Y, SM Megamall, 4/L Building A, Mandaluyong City.

MARIA Congee Gomez holds a photo exhibit on Dipolog City until Aug. 30 at Clamshell, Intramuros.

PINTO Art Gallery will present Wire Tuazon in "Fire Ice Phantoms and Creatures of the Night" at Gallery I; Salvador Alonday, Riel Hilario at Chapel; and David Lantz and Yasmin Almonte at The House on Aug. 31-Sept. 26. Pinto Art Gallery is located at 1 Sierra Madre, Grand Heights, Antipolo City.

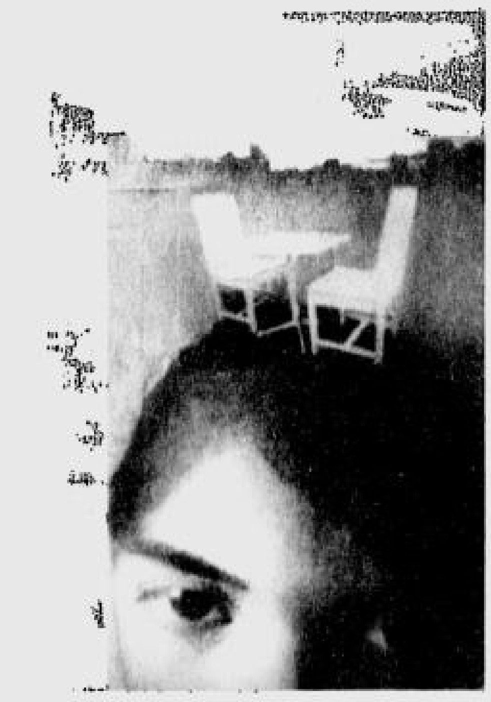
GALERIA de las Islas' "Masterpieces" will be exhibited on Aug. 27-Sept. 13 at the 3/F, Silahis Center, 744 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila. Participating artists are Napoleon Abueva, Angelo Baldemor, Edgar Driodico, Frank Gajo and Rex Santales.

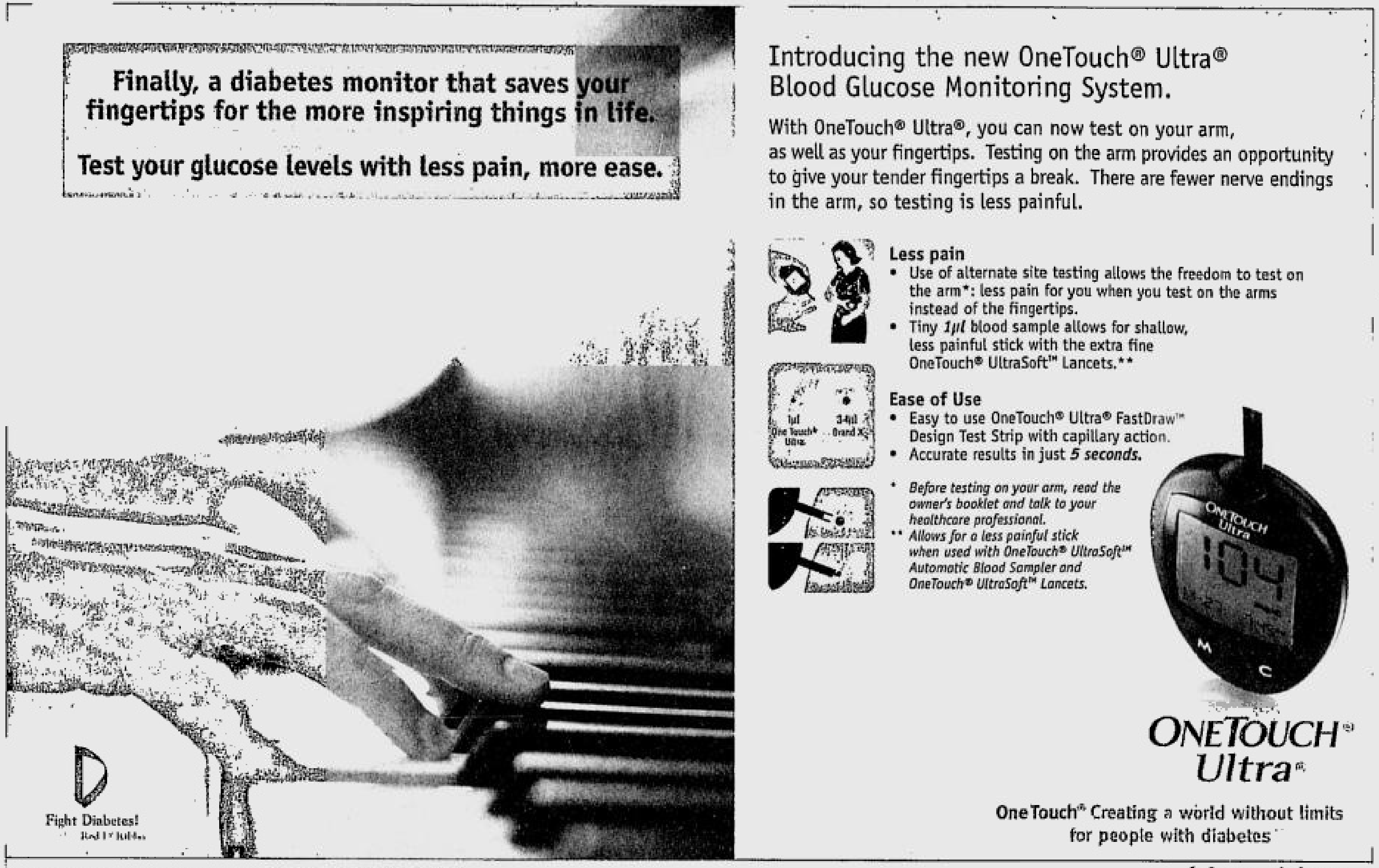
KULAY Diwa Art Galleries presents "FX" until Sept. 10 at Black Gallery. Featured artists are Alexander Abon, Renato Barja Jr., Mark Barretto, Robert Besana, Lawrence Borsoto, Nonie Cruzado, Eugenio Cubillo III, Reynold de la Cruz, Carlo Gernale, Dennis Gonzales, Christopher Guillergan, Mark Magugat, Bernard Pena, Edmond Reboredo and Juanito Torres.

GLORIETTA Artspace holds Lydia Velasco's Gayuma until Sept. 4 at Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati.

ARTWALK opens on Aug. 30 with cocktails at 6 p.m. The gallery is located at the 2/F, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati.

POSITIVISM art workshop is now accepting students who want to learn drawing and painting. The workshops will be held every Saturday, 3-5 p.m., at Enterprise Plaza, 1429 Pablo Ocampo St., San Antonio Village, Makati. Call 8996358/0917-9726223.


"TRUDGING through the Ashes" by C.J. Tañedo at Kulay Diwa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